

# North Star Academy

## CHARTER SCHOOL OF NEWARK

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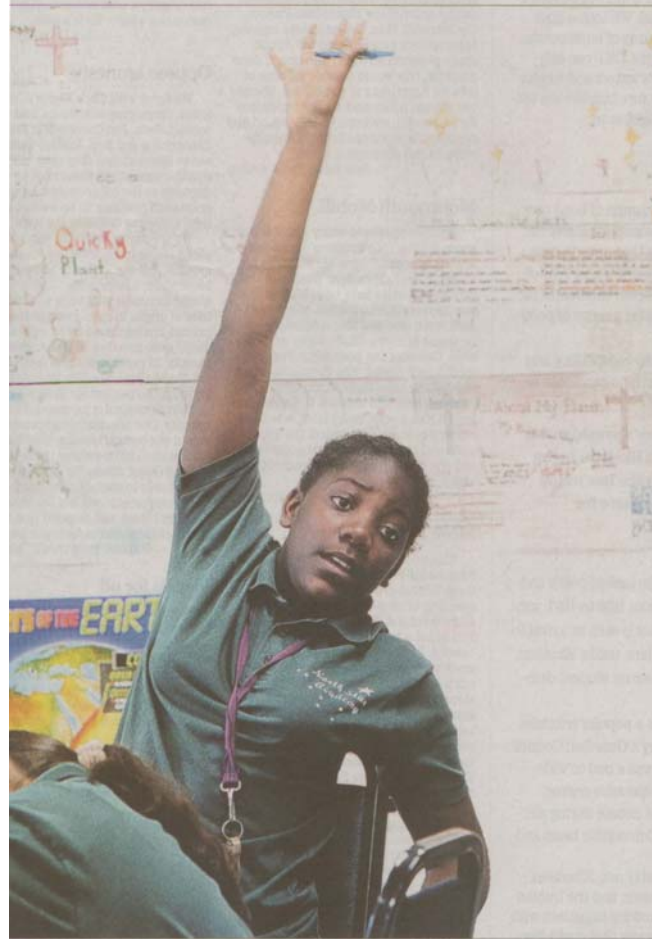
Norman Atkins, Co-Founder

James Verrilli (Co-Founder) and Paul Bambrick-Santoyo, Co-Directors

Julie Jackson, High School Principal

Michael Mann, North Campus Principal

## SHARING THE SECRET OF THEIR SUCCESS



Janita Lovett, 10, a fifth-grader at North Star Academy, has the answer in her science class. North Star is among group of Newark charter schools with plans to spin off additional facilities in their own mold.



PHOTOS BY PATTI SAVONE/THE STAR-LEDGER

From left, Tiana High, 11, Shantia Ellison, 11, and Chaz Hall, 12, attend North Star's "morning circle," a sort of daily pep rally.

### Newark charter to add second middle school

BY JOHN MOONEY  
STAR-LEDGER STAFF

There's something unmistakable about North Star Academy, and it begins in the morning when drums pound and chants rise from this former bank building in downtown Newark.

The occasion is the "morning circle," a half-hour each day that is part pep rally and part sermon for teachers and students.

"Why are you here?" starts the call-and-response, led by the middle school students.

"To get an education!"

"Where are you headed?"

"To college."

"Will you succeed?"

"Yes. Yes."

Successful charter schools like North Star Academy have already changed the way thousands of students are taught in New Jersey. Now may come their biggest challenge yet.

Starting next year, North Star leads a fledgling group of established charter schools that want to spin off second, even third schools in their own mold.

Currently a middle school and adjoining high school, North Star will add a second middle school next year inside the former Our Lady of Good Counsel elementary school in Newark's North Ward.

Also in the city, the Robert Treat Academy hopes to add another elementary school within the next two years, and TEAM Academy plans to apply to the state this fall for permission for a second middle school and a high school.

In Morristown, the Unity Charter School is [See CHARTER, Page 25]

**ANNUAL REPORT: 2004-05 (YEAR 8)**

**JULY 30, 2005**



**North Star's Class of 2004—Continuing the Mission in College**  
*(From l to r): Shanell Powell (New Jersey Institute of Technology),  
Edaine Murray (Mount Holyoke), Tiffany Powell (Rutgers), and Herbert Ruth (Syracuse)*

**SUBMITTED TO:**

**WILLIAM LIBRERA, COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION, STATE OF NEW JERSEY  
ANTHONY MARINO, SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS, ESSEX COUNTY  
MARION BOLDEN, SUPERINTENDENT, NEWARK PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
ROCHELLE HENDRICKS, OFFICE OF INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS AND SCHOOLS  
JENNIFER LANGER, NJ CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS ASSOCIATION**

*"I'm so proud of you. You give me hope that every child can learn and go to college. You stimulate me and give me inspiration. You've got golden opportunities here: you are the future of our country."*

-- SENATOR FRANK LAUTENBERG  
ADDRESS TO NORTH STAR STUDENT BODY, MAY 2005



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**2004-05 SCHOOL DESCRIPTION**  
**NORTH STAR ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL OF NEWARK**

*“On our fall school tour of 15 excellent charter schools in NJ, NY, CT, and MA, one school that absolutely stood out to our Fellows, and to which they make solid and explicit reference in their application writing, is North Star. North Star is living, breathing proof that urban education does work, can work, and the real inspiration that North Star gave to our Fellows cannot be overstated. The sad fact is that there are so few schools doing transformative urban education so well. BES continues to be very proud to champion North Star, and feels very fortunate to have developed a relationship with the school over time.”*

--SUE WALSH, BUILDING EXCELLENT SCHOOLS NETWORK, OCTOBER 2004

**Startup and Current Year.** North Star Academy Charter School commenced implementation in the 1997-1998 school year and just completed its eighth year of operation.

**Address.** The school's original downtown campus is located at 10 Washington Place in Newark, NJ 07102. The North campus—site of 2<sup>nd</sup> middle school—is 658 Summer Ave, Newark, NJ 07104.

**Facility.** The first middle school is located in a three story building that was formerly a financial institution, and the high school is located in a three story building that was formerly an art exhibition center and dance hall. The second middle school leases a floor of the school building owned by Our Lady of Good Counsel.

**Number of Students, Grades and Classes.** The school's charter authorized a maximum enrollment of 488 students in 2004-05 in grades 5 - 12. The enrollment at the beginning of the school year was 300 students. At the end of the year the enrollment was 298 students. There were two classes in the 6<sup>th</sup> through 11<sup>th</sup> grade; 5<sup>th</sup> grade had three classes and 12<sup>th</sup> grade had one.

**Class Size.** Class size is approximately 18 students per class.

**Planned Expansion.** In the 2005-06 school year, the school will open a 2<sup>nd</sup> middle school by adding one additional fifth grade cohort 75 students (adding to the 40 5<sup>th</sup> grade students recruited for middle school #1).

**District(s) of Residence.** The school draws all of its students from the Newark district.

**Employees.** The school employed one Lead Person, two school leaders, 31 classroom teachers (including nurse, special education and specials teachers), two secretaries, a custodian and a part-time bookkeeper.

**Lead Person.** The school's lead person is Paul Bambrick-Santoyo  
Tel. 973-642-0101; Fax 973-642-5800; email: [paulbambrick@northstaracademy.org](mailto:paulbambrick@northstaracademy.org)

**Board Members.** The school's board of trustees was composed of eight voting members and three ex officio members (the school leadership team). Two of the eight voting members were parents.

**Defining Attributes.** A defining attribute of the school is a relentless focus on getting students prepared to succeed in college and life beyond. It supports in emphasis on academic achievement with a strong school culture supported by its Core Values of Community: Caring, Respect, Responsibility and Justice.

**Organizational Affiliation.** The school is supported by Uncommon Schools, Inc, its non-profit affiliate.

## YEAR EIGHT EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: TO COLLEGE AND BEYOND



*"I describe North Star as the best school in Newark, the best school in New Jersey, the best school ever. If my child were not at North Star, I personally believe that he would be six feet under due to gang activities. Instead, North Star has allowed my child to shine and grow, not being lost in the crowd. It is an outstanding school with our children at heart."*

--ANONYMOUS PARENT SURVEY RESPONSE, JULY 2005

### **GOVERNANCE—FACILITY USE AND IMPROVEMENT:**

To accommodate continued expansion, North Star will lease a third school facility in 2005-06, located in Newark's North Ward. In the absence of state facility funding for charter schools, North Star worked with Uncommon Schools—a public charity set up to help the school—to creatively and successfully acquire the necessary resources to finish funding for the high school facility. The proper management of New Market tax credits and federal and private grants funded the purchase and renovation of the high school building, including the creation of a bridge to join North Star's first two facilities.

**RESPONSIBLE MANAGEMENT:** Administratively lean, North Star stretched shorter dollars – 69% of the per pupil public funds attributable to students at traditional Newark public schools – to produce a longer program: an 11-month, extended day schedule featuring smaller classes, top-flight teaching, state-of-the-art technology, and a rich offering of educational opportunities. For the eighth consecutive year, the school both maintained a positive cash flow during the year and ended with a surplus.

**CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT:** Over the past two years, North Star has developed over fifty interim assessments directly aligned with New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards and North Star curricula. These assessments form the backbone of the data-driven instructional model that has greatly enhanced student achievement. In 2005-06, North Star will launch newly revised high school interim assessments, working backwards from Advanced Placement exams and the new SAT.

**DELIVERY OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM:** North Star continues to develop more systematic and creative approaches to serve students who begin with academic deficiencies. An innovative intervention initiative in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade greatly increased reading proficiency skills for those at-risk students. The success of this model will be replicated on a larger scale in 2005-06. In 2004-05, the Skills Enhancement Center successfully completed a Special Education self-assessment review, targeting improvements in transitions and the writing of IEP objectives. In the area of innovative programs, North Star continued to address student development in the broadest sense. North Star students participated in a record number of trips and field experiences, including trips to New Zealand, Olympic National Park, Washington, DC, and Boston.

**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT—COMMITTED, TALENTED FACULTY:** The faculty, chosen from a large pool of applicants, designed an exciting, rigorous academic program, innovated in the classroom, worked far longer hours than their colleagues in other public schools, and logged a superior 98.4% attendance rate. Not only did faculty members receive extensive in-house professional

development, but they also visited many of the highest-achieving urban schools across the country to learn more best practices. In 2004-05, those visits included Gaston College Prep (NC), KIPP Bronx, Roxbury Prep, TEAM Academy, Amistad Academy, and Elm City College Prep. Sixty-nine percent (22 of 32) of the core academic faculty members are returning for year nine.

**ELIMINATING THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP:** North Star students completely eliminated the achievement gap on the New Jersey state assessments. Based on results of the general education students on the High School Proficiency Assessment (HSPA), 95.2% of the 11<sup>th</sup> graders scored proficient or above in Language Arts and 85.7% scored proficient or above in Math—significantly higher than the Newark District, all urban districts and even the statewide average. At the same time, 100% of the 12<sup>th</sup> grade regular education students graduated by passing the HSPA—compared to only 75% of New Jersey students statewide and 35% of the Newark district. North Star's fifth 8<sup>th</sup> grade class performed equally well on New Jersey's Grade Eight Proficiency Assessment (GEPA). Of the general education students, 93.5% scored proficient or above in Language Arts, 80.6% were proficient in Science, and 80.6% were proficient in Mathematics—results which are double the Newark District's average and higher than the stateside average as well. When compared to 2004 results statewide, North Star's GEPA & HSPA scores place them in the top 2% of all urban public schools in New Jersey (over 170 schools).

**100% COLLEGE BOUND AT SECOND HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION:** On June 17th, 2005, North Star sent off its second graduating class. All the seniors were accepted to college—an average of four acceptances each—and every graduate will be attending four-year universities, such as the University of Chicago, Boston College, Syracuse, and Rutgers. Such results offer hope when compared to the Newark District, where only 26% of the graduating seniors report planning on attending 4-year colleges. The school's college placement director brought college representatives to visit the school, broadened students' experiences through campus visits and information, and coordinated students' participation in summer and year-long enrichment programs to strengthen preparation for college. On July 14, 2005, 38 8<sup>th</sup> graders made the first small step towards college by graduating from the middle school. These rising high school freshmen enter North Star Academy College Preparatory High School in September, the sixth high school class since North Star amended its charter at the urging of the Parent Council and community supporters.

**ENGAGED PARENTS:** Parents have been active in all phases of the school, from its founding to its governance. All parents signed the school covenant and came to school a minimum of three times a year to pick up their children's report cards. For the seventh straight year, more than 98% of the parents said in a year-end survey that they were "satisfied" – and more than 93% said they were "*very* satisfied" – with the quality of academic standards at North Star. More than 98% were also "satisfied" or "*very* satisfied" with the quality of teaching, leadership, curriculum, class size and expectations for parents.

**COMMUNITY PARTNERS:** North Star continued to make good on its pledge to utilize downtown Newark as an extended campus, using the YM/WCA for its sports program, the Newark Public Library as the school library, the Newark Museum for its regular exhibits, the New Jersey Performing Arts Center for theatre, dance and music enrichment and Rutgers University-Newark as a college preparatory resource.

**PIONEERING GLOBAL SCHOOL REFORMERS:** North Star, seen as a part of a new paradigm of school innovation, will add a second middle school in 2005 to serve more Newark youth. It also stands as the flagship school for the Uncommon Schools Network, which will expand to four schools in 2005-06. As testimony to its accomplishments, North Star has welcomed in excess of 2,500 visitors over its first eight years. In 2004-05, the school received over 500 visitors from all corners of the globe:



school leaders, politicians, teachers, journalists and educational experts. The school was regularly featured in the media, including articles in the New Jersey Star Ledger and an exclusive spot on Fox News in Cleveland, Ohio. Its directors continued to be centrally involved in the public conversation on school reform, sustaining the work of the New Jersey Charter Public Schools Association and partnering with three of the top national urban principal training programs: New Leaders for New Schools, KIPP Fisher Fellowship, and Building Excellent Schools Network.

**CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES:** North Star middle school launched a successful Encore model that extended the school day until 4:00 pm. From 2:30 pm-4:00 pm, North Star students take non-core academic classes and also have the opportunity to participate in a variety of clubs/activities. In 2004-05, those activities included ballet, robotics, African dance, sexuality education, modern dance, health & wellness, chess, hip hop, Scrabble, and community service.

**SELF-EVALUATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY:** North Star continued to find innovative ways to collect and analyze data about the school's performance in all areas. In accordance with state recommendations, the school improved its existing SEAP to meet new formatting requirements.

**GRANTS:** North Star finished year three of a five-year federal GEAR-UP grant: Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness Program. The grant follows the rising 5<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> grade cohorts, providing support in their preparation for college. GEAR-UP students participated in rigorous tutoring programs in partnership with Rutgers-Newark and listened to engaging presentations in Community Circle about the skills needed to enter and succeed in college. On the basis of academic performance, students earned more than \$13,000 in scholar dollars—financial assistance that they will receive upon acceptance to college in their 12<sup>th</sup> grade year.

**MOTIVATED STUDENTS:** In year eight, student attendance was 97.7% – in excess of the school's 95% target for the eighth consecutive year and higher than both the Newark and New Jersey rates. The number is especially strong given that students were in school at least an hour longer each day than their peers and a month longer over the year.

**STEADILY GROWING SCHOOL IN HIGH DEMAND:** After eight years, North Star has a comprehensive middle school and high school, grades 5-12. Following its original design, North Star started with 72 students (5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders) enrolled in year one, and expanded one grade level at a time until it completed its middle school with 144 students in year three (5<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grade). With an amended charter allowing for a high school, North Star started with 180 students enrolled in year four (5<sup>th</sup> through 9<sup>th</sup> grade) and completed the high school with 270 students in year seven (5<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade). Heading into the 2005-06 school year, North Star has 370 students enrolled, 5<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade. After nine annual lotteries, there are over 1,600 Newark students on the school's waiting list.

*"For the record—I've been on more than a few school visits since last we met, and none have impressed me as much as North Star did.."*

--KAREN LYTLE, SCHOOL PERFORMANCE, JANUARY 2005

*"North Star is one of the best choices I have made. It's given my daughter self esteem knowing she could do whatever she put her mind to."*

--ANONYMOUS PARENT SURVEY RESPONSE, JULY 2005



## REVIEW OF SCHOOL GOVERNANCE & MANAGEMENT

### *BOARD OF TRUSTEES*

#### **NORTH STAR'S BOARD OF TRUSTEES LED SEVERAL MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS, MOST NOTABLY CONTINUED SCHOOL/FACILITY EXPANSION.**

- NORTH STAR'S BOARD APPROVED THE OPENING OF A SECOND CAMPUS FOR NORTH STAR'S MIDDLE SCHOOL TO REACH MORE CHILDREN IN NEWARK. Responsive to parent wishes, pleased with the school's success thus far, and determined that more students have the opportunity for a North Star education, the board approved adding an additional 20 students to its 5<sup>th</sup> grade and expanding the school day in 2004-2005. It also approved a resolution to amend its charter to add a second middle school to open with a new 5<sup>th</sup> grade in September 2005. Both of these initiatives result from the two-fold desire to serve more of the 1,000+ Newark children on the school's waiting list while strengthening the high school financially.
- NORTH STAR'S BOARD AND LEADERSHIP SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED THE LONG-TERM FINANCING FOR THE HIGH SCHOOL FACILITY AT 2 WASHINGTON PLACE. After many months of strategic planning and negotiation, the board finalized the financing of 2 Washington Place through the effective use of New Market tax credits via New Jersey Community Capital and other financial institutions. North Star maintained a positive cash flow and budget surplus despite the lack of state funding for facility purchase and renovation.
- NORTH STAR DID MORE WITH LESS, RECEIVING ONLY 69% OF PER PUPIL FUNDING. North Star operated 18-student, program-rich classes over a longer day and 11-month year— 120% of the program offered in other schools – with significantly less government funding than that available to comparable public schools. Even though North Star received 90% of the base per pupil aid received by the Newark Public Schools, it did not receive the share of Abbott funding earmarked for its students and was forced to pay capital expenses through its operating budget. Given these factors, only 69% of the normal Newark per pupil allowance followed the North Star's students to the school.
- NORTH STAR MAINTAINED A POSITIVE CASH FLOW DURING THE YEAR AND UNDERSPENT ITS INITIAL BUDGET PROJECTIONS. Despite the lower government support, for the eighth consecutive year North Star closed its books with a positive cash flow and a budget surplus. For the eighth consecutive year, North Star also received a clean audit of its school budget.

#### **NORTH STAR'S BOARD OF TRUSTEES UNANIMOUSLY ADOPTED SEVERAL KEY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES TO ENSURE COMPLIANCE WITH STATE REGULATIONS.**

- ANTI-BULLYING POLICY: incorporated into the existing Student Code of Conduct
- PERSONNEL SALARY PLAN: a framework for determining faculty compensation that guided teacher contracts for the 2005-06 school year
- SPED PROCEDURAL REVIEW: In accordance with the results of the SPED Self-Assessment Review, North Star reinforced many of its special education procedures, especially in the area of transition and parental notification

**IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE SCHOOL'S CHARTER, NORTH STAR'S BOARD OF TRUSTEES INCLUDES A MINIMUM OF SEVEN VOTING MEMBERS, TWO OF WHICH ARE THE LEADERS OF THE PARENT COUNCIL. BOARD VACANCIES ARE FILLED EVERY JUNE:**

Cory Booker, Attorney-at-Law, Booker, Rabinowitz, & Trenk (through 6/06)  
Linda Epps, Vice President of Development, NJN (through 6/05)  
Jack Ewing, former State Senator, State of New Jersey (through 6/05)  
Bob Howitt (Chair), Executive Director, WKBJ Foundation (through 6/05)  
Toni King, President of Parent Council, North Star Academy (through 9/05)  
Micheal Lytle, Vice President of Parent Council, North Star Academy (through 9/05)  
Rick Rieder, Managing Director, Lehman Brothers (through 6/06)  
Arthur Wilson, Principal, St. Rose of Lima School & President, NCC Foundation (thru 6/06)

\*Norman Atkins, Board Secretary, *ex-officio*

\*Julie Jackson, High School Principal, *ex-officio*

\*James Verrilli, Co-Director, *ex-officio*

\*Paul Bambrick-Santoyo, Co-Director, Recording Secretary, *ex-officio*

(\*Non-voting members)

**NORTH STAR TRUSTEES MET REGULARLY AND MAINTAINED COMPLIANCE WITH STATE REQUIREMENTS FOR OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS AND TRAINING.**

- THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MET REGULARLY. The Board of Trustees of the school met as a whole seven times during the year (bi-monthly plus a supplemental meeting at budget time). The board had an 85% attendance rate, quite notable given that one board member had an extended medical leave of absence.
- NORTH STAR COMPLIED WITH THE OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT. In accordance with state sunshine law, the Board's meeting schedule is advertised in two local newspapers – the *Star-Ledger* and *El Nuevo Coqui* (the latter in Spanish). It is posted at the school and flagged in the monthly calendars sent to parents.
- THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES ALSO MET IN STANDING AND AD HOC COMMITTEES AS NEEDED. Board members formed part of the standing Advisory Review Committee and Affirmative Action Team and the ad hoc committees for Special Education Self-Assessment Review and Local Mentoring Plan, Professional Development Plan, and No Child Left Behind Application.
- NORTH STAR TRUSTEES MET ALL TRAINING REQUIREMENTS. In accordance with state requirements, every Board member appointed after the 2002-03 school year has attended the NJ School Boards Association training, leaving the entire Board in compliance with state law. The newest board member (enlisted March '05) will attend training at the beginning of the 2005-06 school year. Board members continue to bring to the board their vast expertise from the political, entrepreneurial and educational fields.
- THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES CONTINUES TO PLAN FOR THE FUTURE. As North Star expands, the Board will be focusing its efforts on institutionalizing the infrastructures that have built North Star's success. Three major initiatives will occupy the board in 2005-06: re-writing the Faculty Handbook, budgeting across multiple buildings, and building management systems at scale.

## *SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION*

### **NORTH STAR REMAINED ADMINISTRATIVELY LEAN AND MANAGED A SEAMLESS TRANSITION IN SCHOOL LEADERSHIP.**

- NORTH STAR REMAINED ADMINISTRATIVELY LEAN, EVEN THOUGH IT MUST PRODUCE FAR MORE GOVERNMENT PAPERWORK, RELATIVE TO ITS SIZE, THAN OTHER PUBLIC SCHOOLS. North Star functions not merely as a new school, but essentially as a new school district. Despite the promise of regulatory relief, North Star is expected to complete all of the administrative paperwork and responsibilities faced by conventional school districts. North Star accomplished this work with a back office consisting of one co-director, a 25-hour per week bookkeeper, a part-time certified school business administrator, and two school secretaries.
- THE CO-DIRECTOR TIGHTENED AND STREAMLINED THE SCHOOL ACCOUNTING PROCEDURES. Now in its second year of using the state-mandated FUND-EZ software instead of QuickBooks, North Star improved guides/training to facilitate a more efficient budget management system.
- NORTH STAR LEADERS RE-WROTE KEY JOB DESCRIPTIONS TO DRIVE SCHOOL-WIDE IMPROVEMENTS. North Star leaders enhanced the NSA teaching standards which serve as the backbone for the teacher job description. They also re-wrote the job descriptions for secretarial positions and for the new administrative assistant that will be onsite at the North campus.
- SCHOOL LEADERSHIP LAID THE GROUNDWORK FOR AN INNOVATIVE NORTH STAR LEADERSHIP TRAINING PROGRAM. In 2004-2005, three fellows worked at North Star as leaders in training: fellows from New Leaders for New Schools (year-long residency), Building Excellent Schools Network (8-week residency) and KIPP (Knowledge is Power Program; 4-week residency). The New Leaders fellow was the third in four years to work at North Star. Given the vast experience gained and thinking towards developing future leaders for a growing North Star community, the school leadership began planning a formal North Star Leadership Development Program. One current teacher will enter the pilot program in 2005-2006. The leadership program draws from all the top research around principal training, with key focus areas in supervision/observation, data-driven instruction/assessment, and school culture.
- SCHOOL LEADERS AND FACULTY WORKED COLLEGIALLY TO MAKE DECISIONS. The faculty met weekly and formed decisions about the educational program on a collegial basis. All teachers had regular, ongoing, day-to-day input into all phases of student learning and school culture.
- PARENTS PROVIDE INPUT AND PARTICIPATE IN SCHOOL GOVERNANCE. Parents did not have to negotiate an elaborate bureaucracy to voice their views and concerns about the school. By virtue of its size and responsive set-up, parents had many avenues for providing input and for participating in the governance of the school.
- NORTH STAR MUST BE RESPONSIVE TO ITS FAMILIES AND COMMUNITY. Unlike other public elementary schools in Newark, no students were assigned or forced to attend North Star. Instead, the school had to go out and recruit prospective students and to provide an educational program that met the hopes and aspirations of the parents. Evidence of North Star's success in this regard is the strong demand for admission, low student turnover, enormous level of sibling applications, and high overall parent satisfaction as demonstrated by survey responses. North Star will continue to be responsive to these factors over time.

## REVIEW OF PROGRESS: INCORPORATING THE NJCCCS, DELIVERING AN EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM LEADING TO HIGH ACHIEVEMENT AND PROVIDING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT FOR TEACHERS



*"Your instructional and school culture programs are exceptional, as are your students and staff. Having had the opportunity to see theory meet practical application provided us with such valuable insight as we collaborate around the development of our school program and culture. It is wonderful to see children, who look just like the ones that we will be working with, achieving at high levels. It gave us the unique opportunity to see the potential of our own future. It was truly impressive to see how your students are actively involved in the leadership at your school. We also loved the positive and affirming interactions that your teachers have with your students (especially your math teacher's greeting 'Good Morning Geniuses!')."*

*Ever since [I heard about North Star], I knew that I had to see your school. The reality is even better than I could have imagined."*

--TEIMOSA MARTIN, DESIGN TEAM LEADER, KAIZEN ACADEMY, OAKLAND, OCTOBER 2005

### *INCORPORATION OF NJCCCS*

**CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT PROCESS: NORTH STAR HAS DEVELOPED AN ACADEMIC PROGRAM CONSISTENT WITH THE NEW JERSEY CORE CURRICULUM CONTENT STANDARDS AND THE SPECIFIC GOALS AND ACADEMIC OBJECTIVES OUTLINED IN THE SCHOOL'S CHARTER APPLICATION.**

- **PROCEDURES FOR CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT:** The development of curriculum at North Star is integrally connected to the North Star Assessments and Final Performance Tasks. In 2004-05, the Curriculum committee revisited the middle school Scope & Sequence for math and literacy. Working in conjunction with the Assessment Committee, they utilized the North Star assessments to re-align each curriculum with the New Jersey State Core Curriculum Content Standards, adjusting timelines to place emphasis on the most important standards within each unit and grade level. Literacy specifically focused on enhancing its language/grammar standards, and Math focused on adding more conceptual understanding to each objective. The work resulted concise curriculum guides/timelines and better vertical alignment within each subject. All teachers use these reinvigorated curricula in literacy and Math across the middle school. In general, North Star re-writes its Science, Social Studies, Spanish, Art and Physical Education curricula in cycles every three years, while Literacy and Math receive constant revisions each year.
- **TIME/RESOURCES ALLOCATED TO CURRICULUM WORK:** North Star commits significant time to curriculum planning. In the summer, lead teachers spend their afternoons (12 pm—4 pm) revising curriculum, enhancing activities and assessments, and planning for the following school year. In the week leading up to the opening day of the Fall session, school leaders and lead



teachers guide the faculty in planning for the implementation of the North Star curriculum. Workshops are offered around “power standards” (standards of greatest importance) and general lesson planning. During this week, curriculum timelines are also adjusted in response to a thorough analysis of TerraNova results. One of the strongest resources that North Star provides is the opportunity to visit other high achieving schools across the country. North Star believes that seeing curriculum in action is one of the most effective ways of choosing appropriate improvements to the school’s existing curriculum.

- **CURRICULUM GUIDES:** As North Star has evolved, its curriculum has become more stabilized through the constant improvements of each generation of teachers. Currently each curriculum follows a similar structure that enables all teachers to lead students to content and skill mastery. The North Star Assessments drive the establishment of the end mastery goals in Literacy and Math; the curriculum provides a scope and sequence and suggested activities for the teacher. Each curriculum includes a timeline, an overview of the year-long goals, an assessment framework, a unit-by-unit breakdown, and an explicit reference of which NJCCCS are being taught. Below is a sample timeline from Unit 1 of the 5<sup>th</sup> grade Math curriculum:

<b>TIME FRAME</b>	<b>UNIT-TOPIC TIMELINE</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<b>6 WEEKS</b> (9/8-10/17)	<p><b>Unit 1- NUMBER THEORY</b></p> <p><u><b>Math Facts and Fundamentals</b></u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Complete Basic Addition and Subtraction Facts (<math>6 + 7 = 13</math>, <math>12 - 5 = 7</math>, etc ...)</li> <li>○ Complete whole number addition and subtraction up to four digits</li> <li>○ Demonstrate automatic “reflex” recall of basic facts for multiplication tables 1-12. All students should be able to chant their tables 1-12 orally.</li> <li>○ Multiply a 1-digit number by a 1-digit number and a 2-digit number by a 2-digit number.</li> <li>○ Understand concept of adding, subtracting and multiplying.</li> </ul> <p><u><b>Place Value and Rounding</b></u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Identify place value through billions (to the left of the decimal).</li> <li>○ Identify the place of the underlined digit</li> <li>○ Write numbers in words (ones-billions).</li> <li>○ Write numbers in expanded form- through millions.</li> <li>○ Round numbers to the nearest tens, hundreds, thousands/ tenths, hundredths</li> <li>○ Compare and order numbers (decimals- thousandths, fractions, whole numbers-billions).</li> <li>○ Identify powers of 10.</li> <li>○ Vocabulary</li> </ul> <p><u><b>Coordinate Geometry(extra strand)</b></u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Locate and name points in the first quadrant of the coordinate grid</li> </ul> <p><u><b>Measurement (extra strand)</b></u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Find informal ways of measuring common units (literacy tie-in!)</li> <li>○ Select appropriate measurements (inches or feet)</li> <li>○ Estimate lengths with inches and feet.</li> </ul> <p><u><b>Patterns (extra strand)</b></u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Recognize and extend basic arithmetic patterns.</li> </ul> <p><u><b>Functions</b></u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Create bar graph from given data</li> </ul>	
<b>NSA 5-1</b> Oct. 17, 2003	<b>North Star Assessment on all Number Theory Objectives</b>	

- **CURRICULUM BINDERS:** To contribute to quality student learning, each teacher receives and continues to build curriculum binders. These binders get passed down from teacher to teacher every year and are continuously updated. The binders include all lesson plans, Do Now's, quizzes, major projects, standards-based activities and homework assignments. For any given subject, the material fills between 1-4 three-inch binders. Teachers give school leaders quarterly updates on their curriculum binders and must turn in a completed binder before the end of the summer session.
- **CURRICULUM MONITORING:** Quality curriculum is irrelevant without proper implementation. The most powerful tools for monitoring curriculum at North Star are the North Star Assessment process (see Assessment section), review of weekly lesson plans (see Teacher Supervision/Evaluation section), faculty professional development (see Professional Development section), and teacher observations (formal/informal). School leaders spend considerable time reviewing weekly lesson plans and observing teachers. In teacher conferences, they utilize data from classroom observation and results on North Star assessments to give precise feedback to teachers and help them focus in on student learning results.
- **CURRICULUM NEEDS AND PLANNED ACTIVITIES:** The development of the interim North Star Assessments has greatly facilitated the improvement of the literacy and math curricula in the middle school. In 2005-06, the school will undergo the same process with the high school math and literacy curricula, with a specific focus on college readiness through mastery of the research paper and college-level calculus. The middle school will specifically reinforce reading and mathematical conceptual understanding. At the same time, the Science Department will begin a complete revision of the middle and high school curricula, taking best practices learned from visiting schools such as Princeton Charter. In the following year, North Star will re-visit the History and Spanish curricula (School curricula are available upon request.)

## ***DELIVERY OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM LEADING TO HIGH ACHIEVEMENT FOR ALL STUDENTS***

**NORTH STAR'S BELIEF IN EVERY CHILD:** Every student at North Star falls into the statistical category of "at-risk" established by No Child Left Behind, given the combination of factors that surround them (90% free-reduced lunch, 100% of color, 90% of parents did not go to college, 26% of Newark students go to college, etc.). However, North Star is founded on the principle that all students can achieve greatness. Therefore, the school is dedicated to meet every student's individual needs, and every school program initially targets every student. In addition to the hard work of each classroom teacher, additional services are provided to meet the varying needs of our students:

### **DELIVERY OF SERVICES TO STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS: NORTH STAR OFFERED A MORE SUPPORTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT WHERE INDIVIDUAL STUDENT NEEDS WERE MET, LEADING TO HIGH ACHIEVEMENT FOR ALL STUDENTS.**

- **CENTER FOR SKILL ENHANCEMENT:** The Center for Skill Enhancement is one of North Star's means of reaching students who are struggling to achieve within the rigorous curriculum. The Skills Room provides small group instruction for students with disabilities, students who are in need of skill intervention, and students who require support with study and organizational skills. The Skills Room has maintained two full-time teachers since 2003-04, both fully certified in Special Education and one also a Learning Disabilities Teacher Consultant. One additional part-

time teacher supports the work of the center. As a center, the teachers coordinate and provide these services for students at the middle school and high school levels. In addition, they collaborate with classroom teachers regularly, helping to implement the best techniques for reaching struggling students within the classroom. All North Star students receive strategic tutoring designed to help them to master specific skills necessary for tasks in their core academic courses. Both learning specialists collaborate with teachers in creating age-appropriate materials to teach all core subjects. In many cases, developing the repertoire of strategies of the classroom teachers allows students who might otherwise be improperly classified to thrive in the regular education setting.

- **SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES:** The Center for Skill Enhancement also coordinates special education services. North Star works hard to eliminate the stigma and low expectations associated with the Special Education classification. To that end, North Star has an inclusion model in which students in the school do not know that there are special education students unless they are classified themselves. In 2004-05, the Skills Center managed the cases of 24 students classified as having a disability (8.0% of the student body), and 3 with a 504 classification. These included students with learning disabilities, cognitive impairment, emotional disturbance, and ADHD. These students are provided individual pull-out instruction, small group instruction, and in-class support. The Skills Center staff collaborates with general education teachers to establish the most effective curriculum and instructional modifications, including the identification of “power” standards—the most important skills each child must learn at each grade level. The Skills Center staff also coordinates annual review meetings and reevaluations. In addition to providing services for students who are already classified, the Center also manages the Intervention and Referral Services and Child Study Team Evaluations for those who were suspected to have a disability (a natural role given the extensive work done with non-classified lower-achieving students).
- **CHILD STUDY TEAM STRUCTURE:** The North Star Academy Child Study Team consists of a school psychologist, an LDTC, a social worker, a special education teacher, and a regular education teacher. The team is responsible for conducting evaluations of students with suspected disabilities or previously diagnosed disabilities. The evaluation process begins with a written referral that states the nature of the concern about the student and documents the effectiveness of pre-referral interventions. Once the child’s parent or guardian gives consent, the evaluation process can begin. The process is composed of three main parts: a psychological evaluation, an education evaluation, and a social history report. At times the child study team may also recommend an additional evaluation, such as a psychiatric evaluation or a speech and language evaluation. When all of the evaluations have been completed the team meets with the parent to determine whether the student is eligible for special education services. This determination is based on the regulations set forth in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). If the student is found eligible, the child study team, parent(s), and sometimes the student meet to develop an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) for the student.

If a North Star student is not achieving academic success several types of interventions are put into place before the child is referred for a child study team evaluation. These interventions can include small group skill remediation, after-school tutoring, counseling, one-on-one sessions with teachers, and testing accommodations. If one or more of these interventions are put into place for six weeks or more, but the student is still struggling, he or she may then be referred for an initial child study team evaluation. During the 2004-2005 school year the North Star Academy Child Study Team conducted four initial evaluations. For students who have been previously

diagnosed with a disability and have been receiving special education services, the North Star Academy Child Study Team conducts a reevaluation every three years. During the 2004-2005 school year six North Star students have been reevaluated.

- **SPECIAL EDUCATION SELF-ASSESSMENT REVIEW:** Beginning in 2003-04 and continuing through 2004-05, North Star performed a self-assessment review in accordance with state regulations. In the creation of the 200 page review, the review team was pleased to reach an overwhelmingly positive evaluation of the school's special education services. The review identified many of the strengths of North Star's special education services, including the inclusion model and strong intervention services (mentioned above). North Star also identified areas in need of improvement, most notably the need to improve the writing of IEP objectives and the implementation of transition services. The school followed a detailed strategic plan and calendar for the 2004-05 school year to improve these areas and received a positive visit from the state supervisor in June 2005. North Star looks forward to maintaining the excellence established by the staff of the Skills Enhancement Center.

**DELIVERY OF SERVICES TO LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT STUDENTS: NORTH STAR HAS A SOUND SET OF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES WITH WHICH TO ADDRESS THE NEEDS OF ANY POTENTIAL FUTURE LEP STUDENTS.**

- **LEP POLICIES AND PROCEDURES:** As of 2004-05, North Star has yet to receive a student with limited English proficiency (LEP). In accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:15-1.1 to 1.16, the school has a strict set of policies and procedures in the case of future identification of LEP students. Whereas Newark Public Schools and other New Jersey public school districts are required by law to identify and serve LEP students, most incoming students have already been classified as regular education or LEP students before they enter NSA. As such, North Star distributes the Home Language Survey to incoming non-public school students and verifies the LEP status of any student coming from the Newark District. In the case of a positive result from the survey, the LEP team will be convened, consisting of at least one school director, a regular education teacher (preferably World Languages teacher), and any certified LEP faculty members on staff. This team will administer the state-approved IDEA IPT English Language Proficiency Exam. The student will be classified LEP if she/he fails to meet the state cut-off on the exam AND the LEP team determines that this result concords with other test/classroom data about the student. At that point, a formal LEP program will be put into place in accordance with state code and school policy.

**DELIVERY OF SERVICES TO AT-RISK STUDENTS: NORTH STAR OFFERED A MORE SUPPORTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT WHERE INDIVIDUAL STUDENT NEEDS WERE MET, LEADING TO HIGH ACHIEVEMENT FOR ALL STUDENTS.**

- **SHORT-TERM INTERVENTION IN MATH AND STUDY SKILLS:** As part of its early intervention work, the Center for Skill Enhancement forms short-term intervention groups to support student mathematics and study skills. The center uses the results of a TerraNova pre-test administered in September as well as results on interim North Star assessments to identify students in need of intervention. The staff meets with students in groups of 4-6. Intensive instruction in the needed area was provided for 6-12 weeks. During the current school year, more than ten students were served in these groups.

- **LITERACY INTERVENTION:** The most intensive intervention takes place in the areas of basic literacy (decoding, reading fluency, spelling and writing). Diagnostic tests are administered at the beginning and end of the school year to measure students' basic literacy skills. The results on these assessments are used to target students with low skills and provide them with a short-term literacy intervention. The tests used are the following:
  - ✓ **5<sup>th</sup> grade:** Woodcock-Johnson Diagnostic Reading Battery (WDRB)—the Identification and Word Attack subtests measure students' decoding skills
  - ✓ **6<sup>th</sup> grade:** Test of Word Recognition Efficiency (TOWRE)—measures students' reading fluency; timed reading passage to measure a students words per minute
  - ✓ **7<sup>th</sup> grade:** Test of Written Language (TOWL)—spelling and writing subtests

Students are then selected for short or long-term intervention. This takes place 2-4 days per week during each trimester. Students are moved in and out of the intervention groups depending on their level of need as determined by the ongoing North Star assessments (four times per year) and teacher observation. The class is composed of daily lessons that build fundamental literacy skills such as decoding, sight word reading, reading fluency, and spelling. Students are expected to read and spell sounds and words with speed and accuracy. They are also given opportunities to apply these skills while reading a novel. The literacy intervention groups are found to be very effective in supporting students with poor basic literacy skills. Running these groups is also helpful for differentiating between students who benefit from short-term intervention and those that require long-term academic support. In the current year, over 30 students were served in this manner. After a year's worth of intensive reading instruction, the students targeted for this support had an average increase of over 1½ grade levels in Word Identification and Word Attack strategies, demonstrating great progress in reading decoding and fluency. Additionally, student saw 20% increases in reading achievement on the interim North Star assessments. The increases of students in year-end TerraNova assessments can be seen in the Assessment Results section.

This year the seventh grade English teacher and a Skills Room teacher collaborated to implement strategic reading fluency intervention in the seventh grade. A measure of words per minute was taken for every seventh grader in class once per month. Students whose reading rate was significantly below grade level received small group instruction that focused on reading fluency four days per week for a 6-8 week period. It was found that with monthly timed readings the reading rate of all students increased; however, the amount of increase for students receiving small group intervention far surpassed that of their peers. Furthermore, the small group reading intervention also affected the students' reading comprehension as seen on the North Star Assessments. Students who received intervention increased their score on reading comprehension questions an average of 30 percentage points; their total language arts scores increased an average of 13 percentage points.

- **COUNSELING SUPPORT:** North Star had one part-time social worker and two consulting counselors/therapists during the current school year. They met with 30 students on a consistent weekly basis, and other students were also seen as problems or concerns emerged. The school also brought in two Newark-based psychologists to serve students with additional counseling needs. The students presented a myriad of issues reflective of the challenges they faced in their daily lives. In addition to individual counseling, two groups met on a weekly basis with a special emphasis on anger management and self-image.



## INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS & PRACTICES

*"There's something unmistakable about North Star Academy, and it begins in the morning when drums pound and chants rise from this former bank building in downtown Newark."*

--JOHN MOONEY, NEW JERSEY STAR LEDGER REPORTER,  
JUNE 2005



*"I was moved almost to tears by your high-school community meeting. The ethos that you have been successful in creating is so wonderful. The affirmation of the teachers was really touching and must have been amazing for the students."*

--KIM MARSHALL, 15-YEAR BOSTON PRINCIPAL, NEW LEADERS COACH,  
OCTOBER 2004

*"Prior to my visit, I did not think that I had the energy to stay for the entire school day. After Circle Time, however, I was so inspired by what I saw; I really wanted to soak in as much as I could. While Circle Time has left a lasting impression on me, my overall reaction was WOW! I was most impressed with how hard the teachers work to cultivate a community that exemplifies well established core values. I left North Star feeling blessed to have witnessed something so precious and inspired to pursue such standards in my own school."*

--ALISON MCKENZIE, LOWER SCHOOL HEAD, HARBOR SCIENCE & ARTS CHARTER SCHOOL, JAN. 2004

**IN ITS EIGHTH YEAR, NORTH STAR CONTINUED TO BUILD AN "INTIMATE, SUPPORTIVE, ENGAGING COMMUNITY," WHICH IS A FUNDAMENTAL PART OF THE SCHOOL'S MISSION.**

- **COMMUNITY CIRCLE:** Beginning with the Djembe drum to call students into circle, Community Circle united the school around its central mission: "seeing the star" on the way to college. Students enthusiastically chanted call-responses, listened to motivational speeches/presentations, and occasionally apologized to the community for stepping outside the norms and values of the school. Community circle included student speeches and poems; folktales, parables, discussions and lessons featuring the core values; current events; conflict resolution activities; guest speakers; pledges to the flag and the earth; recognition ceremonies; quiet time for reflection; and other community-building activities. Programs also regularly addressed historical and current events and discussed them in relation to the school's core values. The students also were introduced to Spanish as a part of the World Languages curriculum. Continuing the tradition started in 2003-04, North Star began a tradition of having each 12<sup>th</sup> grader lead a Circle for the middle school about the most important lessons they have learned in their middle/high school career. This common forum served as an important space for collective education, questioning, and reflection. Middle school community circle took place

three days a week in 2004-05 (Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings), and high school community circle—more student-led—took place approximately once every two weeks in the afternoon

- **A FIRM HANDSHAKE AND A SMILE:** Students were greeted with a handshake, and, in turn, greeted school guests with a handshake.
- **CORE VALUES OF COMMUNITY:** All incoming students signed and pledged to live by the “Core Values of Community” at North Star in a ceremony at the end of the first week of school. Students were grouped into teams named (in a variety of languages, including English) for these very values: Caring (Cuidar), Respect (Respeito), Ganas (Heart/Desire), Responsibility (Ujima), Justice (Justice), Perseverance (Gambatte), Truth (Veritas), Peace (Salaam), Faith (Imani), Hope (Esperanza), Social Action (Tikkun), Courage (Courage), Compassion (Agape), Community (Uma), Pride (Pride), Success (Success) and Triumph (Triumph).
- **CALL-RESPONSE:** All students chanted a student-led call-response that emphasized the school’s core values and promoted the idea of students striving “to be the masters of [their] own destiny,” a key component of the North Star mission. (See appendix.) They also chanted a student-led call-response.
- **SCHOOL UNIFORMS:** North Star students wore a uniform to school each day, emphasizing the seriousness of school and de-emphasizing the status of clothing. The uniforms (green polo shirt and green sweater in the middle school, blue polo shirt in the high school, and grey dress pants/skirts, no sneakers) were voted on and purchased by parents. (The school helped pay if families could not afford the uniform.)

## **NORTH STAR SET AND ENFORCED HIGH EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENT BEHAVIOR**

At the start of their first year at North Star, all students are asked to study and sign North Star’s statement of “core values” (caring, responsibility, respect, justice) as a sign that they are prepared to join the community. They sign the document as a pledge at a ceremony with all of their classmates. They are also given a copy of the code of conduct, which explains how those values are translated into action at the school and what will happen if there’s a breach in that conduct. Parents also receive a copy before they apply for admission and after their children are selected. All happily sign a covenant pledging to support the code. They say that one of the reasons why they chose North Star for their children is that the schools their children previously attended were disorderly and unsafe. They want North Star to be disciplined about preserving the community. One of the ways North Star enforces its high standards is by temporarily removing from the community those students who transgress the code of conduct. Students are called to account for behavior that barely elicits a shrug in the traditional district schools.

At North Star a student will be suspended (typically for a day) for serious disrespect of a teacher or fellow student and for raising a hand to another student. For suspended students to re-enter the community, they must return to school with a parent for a meeting to discuss the behavior. Students are also expected to apologize during morning circle for their behavior, to explain which core value was violated, and to ask for their peers’ permission to re-enter the community. For many students this takes some getting used to since the rules in the North Star community often stand in contradistinction to how they learned to get by in their old schools. North Star has meted out detentions and suspensions fairly and consistently over five years. One of the hallmarks of the school’s success has been its ability

to maintain order and safety with high standards for respectful behavior rather than with metal detectors and security guards.

**NORTH STAR LAUNCHED A “STAR DOLLARS” BEHAVIORAL MODEL IN 2004-05 THAT STRENGTHENED THE SCHOOLWIDE CULTURE.**

The Star Dollars Paycheck System was designed to teach students self-discipline and that there are rewards and consequences in life for our actions. Teachers were aware of all of the listed behaviors and were required to give or take points as needed. Young Leaders were assigned as paycheck monitors and kept track of teacher deductions and awards of Star Dollars. Each student began the week with a proposed \$50.00 salary. Deductions were made according to the proposed scale below. When a deduction was made the teacher instructed the monitor to deduct points for certain behaviors:

<u>Misbehavior</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Disruptive, asked to leave class	-5
Absent	-3
Homework	-3 not done, 1 Inc. (5/6) -2 Inc. (7/8)
Late to school or class	-2
Not Following Rules/ Directions	-1
STAR - Sitting/ Standing up straight	-1

<u>Misbehavior</u>	<u>Amount</u>
STAR- Tracking the Speaker	-1
STAR- Always do your work and be on task –Talking	-1
STAR- Show Respect at all times, talking back	-3
Unprepared/ Disorganized	-1 (5,6) -2 (7,8)

Students who maintain certain averages earn additional recesses and field trips, while other students are required to attend study halls.

See paycheck attached at the back of the Annual Report for more details.

**NORTH STAR HAS DEVELOPED A WIDE ARRAY OF INNOVATIVE ACADEMIC PROGRAMS AND PRACTICES ACROSS ALL SUBJECTS, DIRECTLY IN SUPPORT OF THE NEW JERSEY STANDARDS AND SCHOOL OBJECTIVES.**

- **SMALL SCHOOL AND SMALL CLASSES:** Following the design outlined in its charter, North Star served 300 5<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade students during the 2004-2005 school year. The average class size at North Star was 18; the teacher/student ratio, 9:1.
- **CONTINUITY OF INSTRUCTIONAL RELATIONSHIPS:** For the 2004-05 school year, several teachers taught paired subjects, such as English-History and Math-Science, within a single grade. In the high school, core academic teachers in English, Mathematics and History looped up in multiple grade levels. In addition to the learning benefits of looping, this strategy also allowed the teachers to focus more explicitly on creating improved curricula.
- **READING:** North Star students read challenging, engaging pieces of literature. Fifth graders learned reading decoding strategies as part of their regular English class and in small group sessions in the Skill Enhancement Center. The sixth and seventh grade classes practiced a variety of activities to improve reading fluency including word races, echo reading and timed reading. This took place in regular English classes as well as in small groups in the Center for Skill Enhancement. This year, middle school students read both classics and renowned, newer works such as:

5 <sup>TH</sup> GRADE	6 <sup>TH</sup> GRADE	7 <sup>TH</sup> GRADE	8 <sup>TH</sup> GRADE
<i>Anastasia Krupnik</i> <i>James &amp; the Giant Peach</i> <i>The Flip-Flop Girl</i> <i>Skinnybones</i> <i>The Indian in the Cupboard</i> <i>Everything on a Waffle</i> <i>The Pinballs</i> <i>The Egypt Game</i> <i>Hiroshima</i> <i>Super Fudge</i> <i>The Gold Cadillac</i> <i>The Year of Miss Agnes</i> <i>Bunnicula</i> <i>Howliday Inn</i> <i>Nothing's Fair in 5<sup>th</sup> Grade</i> <i>Ice Mummy</i> <i>The Skin I'm In</i> <i>Because of Winn Dixie</i> <i>Nightjohn</i> <i>The Odyssey (retold by Robin Lester)</i> <i>The Great Gilly Hopkins</i> <i>Song of the Trees</i> <i>The Twits</i> <i>Greek Myths (12)</i>	<i>Maniac Magee</i> <i>From the Mixed-up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler</i> <i>Series of Unfortunate Events</i> <i>Walk Two Moons</i> <i>Bud, Not Buddy</i> <i>Harry Potter—Prisoner of Azkaban</i> <i>Bridge to Terabithia</i> <i>The Captive</i> <i>El Bronx</i> <i>The Year of Miss Agnes</i> <i>Joey Pigza Swallowed the Key</i> <i>King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table</i>	<i>Of Mice and Men</i> <i>Johnny Tremain</i> <i>The Witch of Blackbird Pond</i> <i>The Giver</i> <i>Amistad</i> <i>The Pearl</i> <i>The Contender</i> <i>The Light in the Forest</i> <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i>	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i> <i>40 Acres &amp; Maybe a Mule</i> <i>Narrative of the Life of a Slave by F. Douglass</i> <i>Night</i> <i>The Watsons Go To Birmingham</i> <i>The Diary of Anne Frank</i> <i>Black Boy</i> <i>Holes</i> <i>Roll of Thunder, Hear my Cry</i> <i>Autobiography of Ryan White</i> <i>Star Girl</i> <i>Monster</i> <i>Freedom Train</i> <i>Black Ice</i> <i>Hope in the Unseen</i> <i>The Pact</i> <i>How Kambia Flew to Neptune</i> <i>45<sup>th</sup> Street</i> <i>How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents</i> <i>House on Mango Street</i>

The high school continued the North Star tradition of a highly demanding reading list that included the following works

9 <sup>TH</sup> GRADE	10 <sup>TH</sup> GRADE	11 <sup>TH</sup> GRADE	12 <sup>TH</sup> GRADE
<i>Julius Caesar</i> <i>Greek Myths</i> <i>Fahrenheit 451</i> <i>Lord of the Flies</i> <i>Hope in the Unseen</i> <i>I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings</i> <i>An Island Like You</i> <i>When I Was Puerto Rican</i> <i>Catcher in the Rye</i> <i>My Manchild in the Promised Land</i> <i>Poetry by Langston Hughes, Maya Angelou, Diane Burns, Margaret Walker, Gary Soto, Rosalinda Hernandez, &amp; Lorna Dee Cervantes</i> <i>Brave New World</i> <i>The Hot Zone</i> <i>My Heart is on the Ground</i> <i>Star Girl</i> <i>Loser</i>	<i>Hamlet</i> <i>Waiting for the Rain</i> <i>Great Expectations</i> <i>Adventures of Huckleberry Finn</i> <i>Animal Farm</i> <i>Classic Adventures of Sherlock Holmes</i> <i>Short stories by Faulkner, Hemingway, Hawthorne &amp; others</i> <i>The Chosen</i> <i>Excerpts from Dante's "Inferno"</i> <i>The Dutchman</i> <i>"Beowulf"</i>	<i>Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl</i> <i>Their Eyes Were Watching God</i> <i>The Street</i> <i>Great Expectations</i> <i>Native Son</i> <i>Short Stories, Poems and Essays by Emerson, Thoreau, O. Henry, O'Connor, Faulkner, Hemingway, Hawthorne, Allan Poe David Walcott, Phyllis Wheatley, Alice Dunbar Nelson, Kate Chopin, &amp; others</i> <i>The Great Gatsby</i> <i>Classic Adventures of Sherlock Homes</i>	<i>Song of Solomon</i> <i>Things Fall Apart</i> <i>1984</i> <i>A Room of One's Own</i> <i>Linden Hills</i> <i>Night</i> <i>Short stories and essays by Johnathan Swift, bell hooks, John Updike, Calvin Trillin, Mario Puzo, Shelby Steele, Audre Lorde, Kurt Vonnegut Jr., Kate Chopin, Manning Marable &amp; others</i> <i>The Harry Ape</i> <i>A Doll's House</i> <i>The Death of a Salesman</i> <i>Master Harold and the Boys</i> <i>Beloved</i> <i>Heart of Darkness</i>

Students also read poetry, modern short stories, and versions of classic stories such as *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*. They read essays by authors such as Richard Rodriguez and Gloria Naylor and plays such as "Los Vendidos" by Luis Valdez, and "Love Letters" by A.R. Gurney. Based on their reading, students also created portfolios for Romeo and Juliet as well as a thematic collage for the novel, *Night*.

- WRITING:** North Star students wrote constantly – persuasive essays, thematic essays, journals, short stories, poems, creative narratives, comparative essays, explication on poetry and short stories, expository writing, research papers, movie reviews, lab reports, friendly letters, business letters, and newspaper articles. They learned to create story webs, to outline, to edit, and to revise. Fifth graders wrote a 3-7 page extension chapter for *Because of Winn Dixie*, eighth graders wrote film and book reviews as well as a created a brochure on the Gullah Islands and People, and high school students also developed oral histories of Newark. As their final assessment, ninth graders wrote a reflective essay on, "What I Learned This Year in English", put together and delivered a PowerPoint presentation, and worked on a Final Timed Writing Assignment. Students learned, and will continue to learn, the fundamentals of standard English grammar.



- **PUBLIC SPEAKING:** During the morning circle and in all classes, North Star students learned to compose their thoughts and present them in speech, including teaching presentations to their peers. For example, middle school students performed the Odyssey and created a 10-page manual for oral speaking. Other student presentations included oral histories on the social life of Newark, Julius Caesar performances, and declamations of famous speeches by Martin Luther King, Jr.
- **SCIENCE:** North Star students were addressed as a “scientific community,” learned to use the scientific method, wrote in science journals, and discussed complex science issues such as genetics and heredity. They also developed websites about astronomy, earthquakes and volcanoes, composed a rap song about the water cycle, presented a PowerPoint presentation on weathering/erosion, wrote lab reports, read articles in science magazines, mapped molecular structures and studied Darwinian evolution. 5<sup>th</sup> graders did an ornithological bird study at Newark Museum and wrote creative narratives on the life of a water molecule going through the water cycle. Other students wrote poetry on glacial impact and a screenplay on water and wind erosion. High school students completed rigorous, college-preparatory lab experiments and analytical work in biology, chemistry and physics. In biology, 9<sup>th</sup> grade students created pop-up books on topics such as mitosis and cellular transport. As a performance assessment, biology students researched an animal phylum and created a PowerPoint presentation from which they taught the class. Moreover, after conducting an independent dissection of an invertebrate or vertebrate, they created team presentations that instructed classmates on how to complete their own dissection. In chemistry, 10<sup>th</sup> grade students performed titration and determined the ideal mole rate for a reaction. In physics, 11<sup>th</sup> grade students calculated gravity and the speed of sound. They also tested the validity of Ohm’s law. In 12<sup>th</sup> grade Forensic Sciences, the students investigate a simulated murder scene, concluding with a visit from Newark forensic officers. The seniors also constructed and wrote their own Action Research Projects in Environmental Science/Ecology that concluded with a Science Symposium.
- **MATHEMATICS:** Fifth grade students were taught reflex math calculation skills through times-tables jumping jacks, operation charts, cooperative problem solving, and creative strategies for winning math games. Sixth graders used technology as a tool to integrate their learning about data collection, display and interpretation. They also learned rational numbers and operations; division, decimals and scientific notation; variables, formulas and graphs; and rates and ratios. Seventh graders learned to solve simple algebraic equations, practiced quick metric conversions, and used ratios and proportions to solve complex word problems. Eighth graders focused on geometry, probability, and functions. They used graphing calculators as tools to represent data and developed skills in communicating mathematical thinking orally and in writing, as well as conducting a slope project called, “Graphing the Steps.” The 8<sup>th</sup> graders’ Algebra Trimester Exam was a 9<sup>th</sup> grade level assessment. There were many opportunities for students to explore and expand their math skills in teacher-led, out-of-class sessions like GEPA Encore (30 students) and Math Problem Solving (15 seventh and 20 eighth graders). Further, 35 students participated in Saturday GEPA sessions from December to March. 9<sup>th</sup> graders studied Algebra I and created data

collection survey projects associated with research done on the Internet. Those learning Algebra 1 also conducted scale drawings of the classroom. Tenth grade students completed Geometry projects including tessellations, swimming pool designs, and scale drawings of classrooms. A group of nine 11<sup>th</sup> graders took Pre-Calculus in preparation for taking A.P. Calculus as seniors. Other 11<sup>th</sup> graders completed Algebra 2, including the exploration of linear/piece-wise functions in space debris. These 11<sup>th</sup> graders also utilized a programming project to create a matrix-based spell check. Those who studied Algebra 2 worked on linear and exponential quadratic function projects as well as a space debris project. Three of the 12<sup>th</sup> graders successfully reviewed Algebra II and Quantitative Reasoning on their way to passing the HSPA in their senior year attempts (all North Star students passed the HSPA). The majority of the seniors took Pre-Calculus, laying the foundation for continued success in college. All high school students used graphing calculators as a part of the curriculum.

- **HISTORY:** Fifth and sixth graders studied world history and wrote narratives, essays, and rap songs to remember important events in Ancient and European history and geography. Fifth graders studied and created board games based on Ancient Egypt and their assigned book, *The Egypt Game*. Sixth graders taught each other about Medieval African Kingdoms of Ghana and Mali using student-created PowerPoint presentations and role-played characters from feudal Europe's social classes. Seventh graders studied the Age of Exploration by conducting a mock trial for three European explorers, and explored early American history through events such as a simulated Continental Congress. Project highlights included writing a five paragraph essay on whether or not the Jamestown colony was a success and presenting *amicus curiae* briefs to the Supreme Court on the *Amistad* case. Eighth graders continued their studies of American history through the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, with a particular focus on the causes of the Civil War. They then completed a focused summer unit on the Civil Rights Movement. In the course of their studies, the 8<sup>th</sup> graders studied the Holocaust by examining primary source documents from the time period. They also conducted their own research on a topic related to the Civil Rights Movement, and then they taught the class about their topic. High school students incorporated primary document readings into a study of world history, with work including a paper on Tiananmen Square, portfolio presentations on the Renaissance, Reformation, the Scientific Revolution, and the Enlightenment, and essays and presentations comparing the American, French, and Russian revolutions. All high school history students presented a portfolio of their work twice during the year before a panel of peers and invited guests.
- **GEOGRAPHY:** All students learned how to read maps. Fifth graders learned geography of ancient civilizations in Africa, the Middle East, and Asia. Sixth graders learned Middle Eastern and African geography. Seventh graders focused on American and European geography, then engaged in a four-month review of global geography; eighth graders focused on the detail of the Eastern United States. In the high school, students added knowledge of Asian geography. Students from the middle and high school competed in the National Geographic Bee.

- SPANISH:** North Star middle school students are introduced to the Spanish language in Community Circle presentations and interdisciplinary lessons. High school students continued their Spanish instruction in grades 9-11. In 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade, students created travel brochures for regions in Central and South America, practiced oral proficiency during graded conversations, and improved writing skills through personal letters, movie reviews, persuasive essays, and descriptive writing. Specifically, 9<sup>th</sup> grade students took part in an interdisciplinary unit with English exploring Latino issues in the United States. Students also designed creative floor plans for their ideal homes and wellness brochures encouraging healthy habits (all written in Spanish). 10<sup>th</sup> graders traveled to a Latino community and took part in various language immersion activities. In 11<sup>th</sup> grade, students moved towards increased fluency by writing extensive autobiographies, exploring African culture in Latin America, and designing PowerPoint presentations about social injustices occurring in Latin America (all in Spanish). Students read works from prominent Spanish authors, such as *Bodas de Sangre* and *La Casa de Bernarda* (Lorca). They also had the opportunity to interview and be interviewed by native speakers and participate in dialogues about political and social issues.
- DRAMA/THEATRE/ART:** All students at North Star are introduced to both art and drama. In acting, students develop, create and sustain characters in improvisational and formal productions. Students were taught to express and develop character through movement and voice, sensory awareness and expressive development of personal creativity. Middle school students connected theater to characters they studied in literature. High school students analyzed the works of the earliest playwrights and tracked theatre through time to Oedipus Rex and Elizabethan theatre and then to the realistic works of Eugene O'Neill, Arthur Miller, and Tennessee Williams. They also created, directed and acted in original scenes combining techniques learned through various historical models. North Star seniors added anti-realistic, representational and political theater to their repertoire (Augusto Boal, Brecht, Theater of the Oppressed and Theater of the Absurd), and their year culminated with writing one play and directing another. In art classes the students explored all forms of media in creating original works such as masks, murals, paintings, and many interdisciplinary projects. A handful of students also participated in a teacher-led Art Club and others took part in a Fashion Show.
- PHYSICAL EDUCATION:** Students learned the importance of wellness and physical activity as key components of living a healthy lifestyle. All students engaged in multiple forms of physical education throughout the year. They completed a battery of physical fitness tests and learned how to play multiple sports. In the weight room, students were introduced to various aspects of strength training. This includes learning the muscles involved in different weight lifting exercises, differentiating between strength and endurance activities, the importance of cardiovascular exercise and its effect on the body, and proper spotting and safety techniques. In addition, students measured and compared personal body compositions to healthy standards several times throughout the year. On the field, students participated in both individual and team sports. Through these activities, students learned the fundamental skills and rules governing each game as well as appropriate etiquette for each sport.

Finally, in the classroom, the 11<sup>th</sup> graders participated in a course in First Aid and Adult, Infant and Child CPR and became certified by the American Red Cross.

**NORTH STAR FACULTY SHOWED STUDENTS THE CONNECTIONS BETWEEN CLASSES THROUGH INTERDISCIPLINARY LEARNING AND PROJECTS.**

- English and history were taught together by one teacher in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade; the instructor regularly interwove the two subjects. 9<sup>th</sup> grade English and Science made strong connections including a persuasive essay on cloning/genetic engineering. 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade English and history coordinated their studies so that students' reading helped to teach the eras, cultures, and places which they were learning in history. Eighth grade English and art teachers collaborated on a project exploring Nazi Propaganda while reading *The Diary of Anne Frank*. English and history teachers in the high school implemented roundtable discussions which required students to draw connections between the literature and historical periods the students were studying. These examples are just a sample of the everyday interdisciplinary work at North Star.

**NORTH STAR'S CURRICULUM ADDRESSED STUDENT DEVELOPMENT IN THE BROADEST SENSE.**

- As an initiative to encourage success among the school's male students, North Star led a "Reaching Our Young Men" Conference with over 100 participants: professionals of color, middle school boys and their fathers, older brothers, and male mentors.
- The high school continued Black Professionals Day, where all 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade students participated in workshops and panel discussions led by qualified professionals of color from a wide variety of careers. Activities focused on the importance of a college education and preparation for professional life.
- During the winter (December through March), all North Star students swam and played sports twice per week at the YM/WCA. During the rest of the school year, a physical education teacher led student activities on the school's synthetic outdoor turf field.
- High school students met in small group advisories every afternoon for 45 minutes (with the exception of Wednesday, when high school had their own Community Circle). These advisory groups followed a structured format that included a community service project, athletic events, relevant novels, completing and checking homework, receiving tutoring help from specific teachers, and preparing community circle presentations.

## **NORTH STAR MADE SUPERIOR USE OF TECHNOLOGY AS AN EDUCATIONAL TOOL.**

- **INTERNET ACCESS IN EVERY ROOM:** North Star continued to provide students with access to high-quality technology. The school continued to be hooked up to the Internet via a T-1 connection after receiving the federal E-Rate discount (90%) from the Schools and Libraries Corporation. In addition to two fully-equipped computer labs, every classroom at North Star had at least one computer with internet access.



- **INCOMING STUDENT COMPUTER TRAINING:** All incoming 5<sup>th</sup> graders participated, for three hours each week, in an introductory computer class that supported their other academic work. They learned to touch-type on computer keyboards whose letters have been obscured by paint. Returning students continued to practice on these same keyboards, increasing their speed and accuracy.

They also learned to create written documents (using Microsoft Word), design basic publications (using Microsoft Publisher), conduct internet searches, and use Inspiration Web.

- **TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATED IN THE CURRICULUM:** All 6<sup>th</sup> grade students participated in a continuing computer class where they reinforced previously learned skills and added the ability to author computer presentations (using PowerPoint) and to make tables and graphs in Excel. All 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade North Star students increased their skills in creating computer presentations (using Power Point) and authoring interactive CD-ROM disks and web pages (using Netscape Composer). High School students were expected to work independently on the computer using any of the above-mentioned programs for class projects.
- **INDIVIDUAL STORAGE FOLDERS FOR EVERY STUDENT:** All North Star students had easily-accessible, individual computer folders in which to create and store their work.

## **NORTH STAR STUDENTS PARTICIPATED IN NUMEROUS, RICH EDUCATIONAL FIELD TRIP AND OUTDOOR EDUCATION EXPERIENCES, BROADENING THEIR SENSE OF THE WORLD AS THEIR CLASSROOM.**

### **END OF THE YEAR TRIPS:**

- **NEW ZEALAND:** This summer 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> graders went on a cultural and educational trip to New Zealand which had the students visiting the Maori Tribe, learning firsthand about their rituals and history. The students toured Kawhia Historical Sites, observed maroi korowai (cloak weaving), went on a Harbor Cruise and visited with students from Melville High School. The students regularly were asked to keep journal



entries detailing their trip, as well as participating in formal discussions about their experiences and impressions.

- AFS CULTURAL EXCHANGE PROGRAM: Select 10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> graders participated in 6-8 week exchanges to places like China, Costa Rica and Argentina.
- WASHINGTON, DC: 8<sup>th</sup> graders went on a three-day trip to Washington, DC. Students received an inside tour of the workings of the Senate through Senator Lautenberg's office in addition to touring many other government buildings and historical landmarks. The group also concluded their Holocaust History unit with an extended visit to the Holocaust Memorial Museum. They also toured local universities.
- BOSTON: Four teachers accompanied 32 seventh graders on a three-day trip to Boston, Massachusetts. Students prepared for the trip by studying the origins of the American Revolution in History class and the art of the early American colonial period in English class. While in Boston, the seventh graders walked the Freedom Trail, visited the Black History Museum on Beacon Hill, received a tour of the U.S.S. Constitution by the U.S. Navy, and spent three hours at the Museum of Fine Arts sketching and studying colonial paintings. Students were also given a tour of the Harvard University campus by alumnus Michael Mann (where they delivered a Patrick Henry declamation from the steps of Widener Library) and of Boston University by alumnus Emily McCord. One docent at the MFA said that, "this group is one of the most focused and interested that I have ever seen visit the museum."
- WASHINGTON STATE: 23 sixth graders and 6 fifth graders took a week-long, teacher-led, ecological field experience to Olympic National Park (WA) and Seattle, WA. Students conducted field tests of the watershed, went on a canoe expedition on Lake Crescent, tidepooled at the Pacific Ocean, explored the skins and skulls of black bears and other local animals, and learned local native stories and traditions. There was an emphasis on team-building, with students expected to exhibit personal leadership and camaraderie.
- KIDS CAMP: North Star fifth graders spent two days at an outdoor education, group-building program in Blairstown, NJ, working on team games and learning in the Mountain Classroom program. Fifth and sixth graders returned to Kids Camp during the July session for two additional days of outdoor education, ecology, and athletic instruction.

#### **OUTDOOR EDUCATION EXPERIENCES:**

PROJECT USE: Collaborating with Project USE, the leader in outdoor education in New Jersey, North Star continued to provide a rich offering of adventure and environmental experiences for its students. Each class of North Star middle school students went on at least one day-long outdoor education trip:

- PROJECT USE TRIPS: Fifth grade students studied organic farming at Genesis Farm (Blairstown). Sixth graders participated in outdoor service projects in Wawayanda

State Park. At Wildcat Mountain (West Milford), 7<sup>th</sup> graders participated in rock climbing and 8<sup>th</sup> graders participated in an overnight canoe and hiking trip. Ninth grade girls and boys went on three-day, single-sex backpacking trips along the Appalachian Trail. High school students bound for New Zealand also visited Wildcat Mountain for a day. All students participated in initiative games and developed teamwork skills. Once during each trimester, a mixed-grade group of students took a day to participate in a trip rewarding their citizenship and academic accomplishments; trips included cross-country skiing, canoeing, and hiking.

- PRINCETON-BLAIRSTOWN OVERNIGHTS: 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> graders went on two-day overnight trips in Hardwick, New Jersey, where they studied the environment; participated in a variety of team-building exercises; and participated in ropes courses.
- KIDS CAMP: North Star fifth graders spent two days at this outdoor education, group-building program in Blairstown, NJ, working on team games and learning in the Mountain Classroom program. Fifth and sixth graders returned to Kids Camp during the July session for two additional days of outdoor education, ecology, and athletic instruction.
- SOUTH DAKOTA VOLUNTEER PROJECT: North Star sent two high school students to do a month of volunteer construction and community work on the Rosebud Native American Reservation in South Dakota, the third year North Star students have participated in this project. A North Star teacher accompanied the students this year and served as a team leader.
- INDEPENDENT LAKE CAMP: Through a partnership agreement, three North Star students received full scholarships to attend this four-week international summer program in Orson, Pennsylvania (Pocono region) which provides enriched activities in outdoor education, sports, visual arts, and music.
- NATIONAL OUTDOOR LEADERSHIP SCHOOL (NOLS): One North Star high school student completed a 14-day wilderness trip in Teton Valley, Wyoming. This was North Star's fourth year of NOLS participation.
- BRANTWOOD CAMP: North Star facilitated a summer camp experience for middle school students at Brantwood Camp in Peterborough, New Hampshire. For the sixth year in a row, Brantwood recruited students at North Star and provided them with camp scholarships for a high quality, full-service, 17-day camp near Mount Monadnock. Two dozen North Star students have attended the camp over the past five years.
- APPEL FARM CAMP: Several North Star students attended this two-week arts-focused camp (the fifth year of North Star's participation) in Elmer, New Jersey to enrich their studies in visual and performing arts.

**DAY FIELD TRIPS:**

- **HISTORICAL SITES:** Students enriched their understanding of major historical events by visiting important sites in our nation's history. Visits included Statue of Liberty, Ellis Island, Capitol Building (Washington, DC), Independence Hall (Philadelphia), Waterloo Village, Clinton Barracks Museum, and the Morristown Museum, Washington's Headquarters, and the New Jersey Historical Society.
- **MUSEUM TRIPS:** Various grade levels attended exhibits at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Natural History (their Mobile Museum), Tenement Museum (Lower East Side, NYC), Brooklyn Museum, Wax Museum, Liberty Science Center, and the Guggenheim Museum.
- **THEATRE PRODUCTIONS:** In addition to the performances at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center (see "Community Involvement" section), high school students attended "The Chosen" at Papermill Playhouse, "Othello" by the Shakespeare Repertory Theatre at the George Street Playhouse, and contemporary theatre at the Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM). Other students viewed productions at the McCarter Theater in Princeton.
- **JEWISH HERITAGE MUSEUM:** 8<sup>th</sup> graders had the opportunity to listen to first-hand experiences from a Holocaust survivor at New York City's Jewish Heritage Museum—Holocaust Museum, while others heard from Holocaust survivors at the Morristown Museum.
- **ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE TRIPS:** 12<sup>th</sup> graders studied Environmental Science topics in visits to the Camden Aquarium, the New York Botanical Gardens, Prospect Park Botanical Gardens, and the Bronx Zoo.
- **MEDIEVAL SIMULATION:** After learning about the time period, some students went to *Medieval Times* to enjoy a meal and view a tournament.
- **DODGE POETRY FESTIVAL:** Ninth graders visited the Dodge Poetry Festival after having analyzed and explicated various poems, in addition to having written their own poetry.
- **OTHER CULTURAL AFFAIRS:** Twenty students went to Lincoln Center to view a New York City Ballet performance.

**NORTH STAR'S EXPANDED COLLEGE PLACEMENT PROGRAM EXPERIENCED TREMENDOUS SUCCESS DURING THE 2004-2005 SCHOOL YEAR WITH 100% OF THE GRADUATES OF THE CLASS OF 2005 ACCEPTED TO COLLEGE.**

HIGH SCHOOL COLLEGE GUIDANCE AND PREPARATION: Heading into the 2005-06 school year, North Star will continue with a full complement of 9<sup>th</sup> -12<sup>th</sup> graders focused intently on the college selection and admissions process. North Star continues to commit important

resources towards its college program by increasing the role of the school's college placement director. The placement director fulfills an additional role as the College Liaison, providing ongoing support to North Star graduates during their college years. The placement director visits each student once a year, establishing relationships with academic support services personnel, and continuing to help alumni access summer internship or enrichment opportunities. In addition, the placement director has built an alumni program where graduates can return to North Star to assist in the college application process, share their experiences with current students, and act as hosts during college visits.

The college placement director built relationships with college admissions recruiters and with our students and families. The activities that resulted were as follows:

- **COLLEGE APPLICATION PROCESS:** North Star committed valuable resources and time to the college application process. The college placement director team-taught the Senior Thesis class, focusing three days a week on assisting students with application preparation. Students used the mobile laptops and typewriters to complete applications and college essays. The high school and middle school staff participated in the Mock Interview Process where students were scheduled for simulated college interviews and received immediate feedback on their strengths and weaknesses. Students were able to refer to this experience as they set up interviews with college recruiters and alumni. The high school staff also assisted with the final review of applications and essays. The placement director gave students a timeline that required one application to be completed bi-weekly. This ensured that the majority of the students' applications were completed by December 2004. As a result, seniors began receiving admissions decisions as early as November.
- **COLLEGES VISITING NORTH STAR:** Eighteen admissions officers came to North Star to talk about their schools and recruit North Star students:
 

✓ Swarthmore College (9/18)	✓ Fordham University (10/22)
✓ Connecticut College (9/19)	✓ Colby College (10/29)
✓ George Washington U. (9/22)	✓ Bentley College (10/31)
✓ Howard University (9/29)	✓ Smith College (11/5)
✓ Rutgers University (9/29)	✓ Vassar College (11/5)
✓ Virginia Commonwealth University (10/2)	✓ Shippensburg University (11/10)
✓ College of New Jersey (10/3)	✓ Drexel University (11/14)
✓ Stockton State College (10/14)	✓ Steven's Institute of Technology (11/19).
✓ Dickinson College (10/17)	
✓ Syracuse University (10/20)	
- **NORTH STAR COLLEGE TRIPS:** 9<sup>TH</sup>-12<sup>TH</sup> graders participated in various college visits this year. 9<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> graders went on a two-day trip to Washington, DC where the students visited Georgetown University, Howard University, George Washington University and Morgan State University. The 10<sup>th</sup> graders made the annual sophomore tour of Rutgers University-New Brunswick where they talked to the

Educational Opportunity Fund director, college students and admissions counselors. 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders went for a day to Montclair State University while some 11<sup>th</sup> graders went to Philadelphia and visited University of Pennsylvania, Temple and Drexel. Some North Star high school students also went on overnight visits to Cornell University and University of Vermont, as well as partaking in Smith College's Women of Distinction Program. In addition, many North Star high school students visited North Star alumni in their respective colleges or universities.

- **PARENT-STUDENT COLLEGE NIGHTS:** Students and their parents attended two parent workshops focused on getting ready for college. The presentations at the workshops included paying for college, completing the FAFSA and preparing for the PSAT/SAT.
- **COLLEGE FAIRS:** Twelfth graders attended the Historically Black Colleges and Universities College Fair held at Passaic County College where many were able to get onsite admissions decisions.

#### **NORTH STAR PLACED MANY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS INTO SELECTIVE COLLEGE ENRICHMENT PROGRAMS IN THE SUMMER OF 2005.**

SUMMER ENRICHMENT PROGRAMS IN 2004 AND 2005: North Star's high school students were accepted into the following college preparatory enrichment programs, internships, and community service programs, most of them with full scholarships:

- AFS Intercultural Programs (China, Argentina, Costa Rica, Paraguay)
- New Jersey Governor's School of International Studies
- Visions Services Adventures (Ecuador, Dominican Republic)
- El Gomrok Education Department Language Studies Program (Egypt)
- Rutgers University Nanomaterials Engineering and Science Internship
- Lehman Brothers
- Junior Statesmen Program at Georgetown, Yale and Princeton University
- Project U.S.E. South Dakota Reservation Service Project
- Catholic University Debate Program
- Mikesell & Associates—architectural design firm
- DeVry University Computer Technology Camp
- Dreamcatcher Reparatory Theater Acting School
- National Outdoor Leadership School (Wyoming & South Dakota)
- National Tuberculosis Center at UMDNJ
- American Express Financial Advisors
- Habitat for Humanity
- NJ Historical Society
- Upward Bound—Rutgers & NJIT
- New Community Corporation
- Newark Museum

**NORTH STAR RECEIVED A GEAR-UP GRANT (GAINING EARLY AWARENESS AND READINESS FOR UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMS) TO EXPAND ITS COLLEGE FOCUS IN THE MIDDLE SCHOOL.**

TARGETED ASSISTANCE TO 5<sup>TH</sup>-8<sup>TH</sup> GRADERS: North Star was awarded the federal GEAR-UP grant to increase college readiness of its middle school students. Over five years (2002-2007), North Star will work with seven cohorts (continuing with the present 5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> graders) in the areas of parental involvement, academic preparation, and college awareness. On average, each North Star student participated in over twenty hours of GEAR-UP activities, highlighted here:

- CHALLENGING TUTORING PROGRAM AT RUTGERS: 40 North Star students received one-on-one tutoring services from college students at the Rutgers University-Newark, just five blocks from school. Meeting every Friday for two hours, the students followed a specially designed Reading and Math curriculum that was aligned with North Star standards. North Star students were tutored by well-trained Rutgers collegians through the college's Equal Opportunity Fund (EOF) Program.
- COMMUNITY CIRCLE PRESENTATIONS: North Star students heard many Community Circle presentations that focused directly on "gearing up" for college. These presentations included a GEAR-UP Induction Ceremony and motivational speeches from the 12<sup>th</sup> graders on their way to college, college admissions officers, and distinguished visitors.
- SCHOLAR DOLLARS: As part of the grant, North Star initiated a Scholar Dollar program, where students and parents earned a total of over \$13,000 towards college by participation in workshops and strong academic performance.

## *USE OF TIME*

**NORTH STAR STUDENTS SPENT MORE TIME IN CLASS AND DOING SCHOOLWORK THAN THEY DID IN THEIR PREVIOUS SCHOOLS. THEY ALSO ARE HELD MORE ACCOUNTABLE FOR DOING THEIR WORK.**

- 11-MONTH PROGRAM: North Star students attended school from September to July. (200 days v. 180 at conventional schools.)
- EXTENDED DAY: North Star was open from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. each day. Classes ran from 8:15 to 3:30 (one hour longer than conventional schools). In addition, there were regular after-school activities.
- TWO HOURS OF HOMEWORK ASSIGNED EACH NIGHT: Students were assigned 20 minutes to a half hour of homework for each of their core academic classes each night (Math, Science, English, History, Spanish).

- **SPECIAL SATURDAY CLASSES:** Students in 8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade participated in additional three-hour Saturday classes to prepare for GEPA, HSPA and SAT assessments.
- **BEFORE-SCHOOL READING GROUPS:** Targeted students in 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade participated in additional morning classes before school began.
- **AFTER-SCHOOL HONORS GROUP:** 7<sup>th</sup> graders read *To Kill a Mockingbird* as an independent project and participated in after-school literary roundtables that enhanced critical reading and writing skills.
- **TUTORING:** All students who needed extra help received individual tutoring during the regular school day, at lunch hour or before or after school. In the 5<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> grades, over 75 students participated in a three two-hour weekly tutoring and Science Education programs at Rutgers-Newark through the federal GEAR-UP grant.
- **ADDITIONAL HOURS AND DAYS:** When students did not complete sufficient work, or work of sufficient quality, they sometimes had to stay after school or come to school on Saturdays or vacation days.
- **HOMEWORK:** All students were required to complete missing homework in school, either during lunch, recess, or after school. North Star entered its second year of implementation of an extended day program across all grade levels for those students who chronically failed to complete their homework on time. A total of 90 students (approximately 15 students per grade level from 5<sup>th</sup> through 9<sup>th</sup> grade and 15 students combined in 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade) met each day for 1¼ hours after school to inculcate the homework habit.
- **CLASSWORK:** North Star held students accountable to an ever higher standard this year, recognizing the need to enforce study habits and skill development early in a student's academic career. In consultation with parents and teachers, and following months of interventions targeted to help low-performing students, the school retained any student who failed more than one core academic subject (previously, students were retained after failing more than two core academic subjects). North Star will continue to demand the highest standards of academic achievement in the belief that students are capable of meeting the challenge.
- **PERFORMANCE TASKS:** Middle school students who did not successfully complete year-end performance tasks spent time practicing and improving skills in a summer course, and were required to appear before a second panel at the end of July.



## *PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT FOR TEACHERS*

### **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES: FACULTY CONTINUOUSLY DRIVES TOWARDS PROFESSIONAL GROWTH AND IMPROVED INSTRUCTION.**

- **IN-HOUSE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES:** FACULTY WORKED WITH SCHOOL LEADERSHIP IN SHARPENING FOCUS ON DATA-DRIVEN INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT. Professional development closely aligned itself with the school-wide emphasis on data-driven decision making. A series of monthly workshops throughout the year invited teachers to analyze student data on standardized, interim assessments in order to improve instruction. Leaders used the 3-hour workshops to initiate themes that were continued through the weekly professional development meetings. A list of in-house professional development highlights follows here:

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT HIGHLIGHTS 2004-2005		
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>FOCUS:</b>	<b>NOTES:</b>
Summer 2004	<b>Teaching Strategies Seminars ("Bootcamp")</b>	Workshops on Language Arts, Math, & Understanding by Design; many schools attend
9/5/04	<b>Faculty Retreat</b>	Develop professional learning community
10/22/04	<b>Data Collection &amp; Analysis</b>	Data collection & analysis for NSA #1
11/24/04	<b>Departmental Workshops</b>	Math/Science: Lesson planning & spiraling; Literacy/History: Lesson planning & oral drill; Spanish: standards scope & sequence
12/10/04	<b>Data-Driven &amp; Differentiated Instruction</b>	Analyze results on NSA #2; develop differentiated techniques for "Re-teach" weeks
1/21/05	<b>Departmental Workshops</b>	Math/Science: conceptual understanding; Literacy/History: Writing standards; Spanish: written fluency
2/11/05	<b>Data-Driven &amp; Differentiated Instruction, Part 2</b>	Analyze results on NSA #3; develop differentiated techniques for "Re-teach" weeks
3/11/05	<b>Departmental Workshops</b>	Math/Science: open-ended questions; Literacy/History: Reading standards; Spanish: written fluency
4/15/05	<b>Standardized Tests &amp; Technology Integration</b>	Review test preparation techniques; integrate technology with Powerschool, Discourse
5/13/05	<b>Final Performance Tasks &amp; School Culture</b>	Design performance tasks, rubrics and lesson plans; build school culture
Summer 2005	<b>New Teacher Professional Development Seminars</b>	Workshops on management/culture, lesson plans, expectation, etc.

- **OFF-SITE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:** FACULTY VISITED HIGH ACHIEVING SCHOOLS AND ATTENDED SPECIALIZED WORKSHOPS TO IMPROVE THEIR TEACHING. In addition to the extensive in-house professional development, visiting high achieving schools is one of the most effective means of improving schools and teachers. In 2004-05, North Star facilitated visits to high-performing schools across the region: Roxbury Prep, Boston Collegiate, and Academy of the Pacific Rim in Boston; Amistad Academy and Elm City in New Haven; YES Academy in Houston.

and Team Academy in Newark. In addition, the entire Literacy department attended a weekend intensive workshop at Gaston College Preparatory School in North Carolina, one of the highest performing middle schools in the country. The Math department likewise attended a weekend workshop at the KIPP School in the Bronx. In total, over 75% of the staff was able to visit at least one of these schools. After each visit, the faculty would plan what methods/systems/teaching techniques could be implemented at North Star. In addition to these school visits, teachers attended multiple workshops from AP Calculus to subject-specific teaching strategies to inclusion models.

- **USE OF INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY:** As highlighted in the Innovative Programs section, technology is woven throughout the North Star curriculum. Incoming staff are trained in the necessary strategies needed to integrate technology into their lesson plans. As a sign of how well technology is integrated, 100% of the faculty use technology in the design of their lessons, ranging from typing papers on the computer to PowerPoint presentations to math Excel spreadsheets to online searches and chats around a particular topic.
- **COMPLIANCE WITH NCLB MANDATE FOR HIGHLY QUALIFIED TEACHERS:** North Star fully applauds the intent of the No Child Left Behind federal legislation to elevate the expectations for teacher quality in Title I schools. The quality of the North Star faculty is one of the most important factors leading to the school's success (see Assessment section). Unfortunately, the state's interpretation of the federal legislation only focuses on teacher certification rather than true teacher quality. That being said, the school makes every effort to comply with HQT requirements. Every existing teacher has met the NJHOUSE standard for HQT (if not already qualified), and every new teacher hire is either already certified or in the process of certification.

**PREP TIME/PLANNING TIME: FACULTY ASSUMED SCHOOL AND CURRICULUM LEADERSHIP.**

- **PLANNING TIME:** On average, each teacher had two preparation periods each day. All teachers participated in the development of the curriculum, chose textbooks and instructional materials, and helped shape the culture of the school.
- **GRADE LEVEL MEETINGS:** On average teachers met weekly in grade-level teams (45 minute meetings) and designed intervention strategies for struggling students
- **FACULTY MEETINGS BUILT ON THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOPS AND FURTHER ENHANCED INSTRUCTIONAL QUALITY.** All teachers met weekly for 1 ½ hours. During the summer, the student school day ends at noon and the teachers stay until 4:00 pm to allow for intensive professional and curriculum development. In total, teachers receive over 75 hours of in-house professional development.

## TEACHER SUPERVISION AND EVALUATION: FACULTY DRIVES TOWARD SELF-IMPROVEMENT.

- **TEACHERS RECEIVE CONSTANT INFORMAL FEEDBACK FROM SUPERVISORS VIA DAILY WALK-THROUGHS.** North Star directors spend the largest portion of their time working with teachers to develop better teaching strategies centered on student achievement. Each director does a daily walk-through in which s/he visits at least 85% of the classrooms in the school. These visits last between 2-15 minutes each, and teachers receive informal feedback based on these observations. One of the templates used for walk-throughs includes the following two statements that the director gives to the teacher:
  - ✓ During my visit to your class today, I was impressed by. . .
  - ✓ During my visit, I also wondered . .
- **TEACHERS RECEIVE THREE FORMAL OBSERVATIONS EACH YEAR.** For each formal observation, school directors hold a pre-conference to review the lesson and anticipate challenges. The formal observation lasts the whole period, and then the teacher and director have a post-conference in which each shares their evaluation of the lesson. The director gives the teacher a lengthy written observation and an evaluation of the teaching in accordance with the North Star Teaching Standards (see appendices). The teacher also grades himself/herself according to the standards, and the two compare their results to see how to best focus future efforts in improving teaching and learning.
- **DIRECTORS GUIDE TEACHERS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF QUALITY LESSON PLANS.** Even with the regular walk-throughs and formal observations, the school leadership cannot possibly be present in all classes at all times. Thus, the development of effective lesson plans is essential to ensure year-long teaching quality. North Star teachers are expected to use the following format in designing their lesson plans:

<b>OBJECTIVES / STANDARDS:</b> Students will be able to:
<b>DO NOW:</b>
<b>WORDS OF INSPIRATION:</b>
<b>ORAL DRILL:</b>
<b>HEART OF THE LESSON – ACTIVITY #1</b> (presentation, guided practice, discussion)
<b>CHECKING FOR UNDERSTANDING:</b>
<b>HEART OF THE LESSON – ACTIVITY #2</b> (guided practice, independent practice, group work, discussion)
<b>CLOSURE: FINAL CHECKING FOR UNDERSTANDING:</b>
<b>HOMEWORK:</b>

To assist teachers in lesson planning, North Star has a Lesson Planning Annotated Guide that helps teachers ask central questions when planning each part of the

lesson. Below is a sample of the questions asked for the lesson section “Objectives/Standards”:

**NORTH STAR DAILY LESSON PLAN FORMAT – QUESTIONS WE MUST ASK OURSELVES**

**❖ OBJECTIVES / STANDARDS:**

- Are we beginning our plans with a clear, specific end goal? Are we being very clear about what we want our students to master by the time we finish our lesson?
- Are our objectives clearly mastery objectives? Are they about what the students will be able to do?
- Have we consulted the North Star Standards? Do we understand exactly what the standard is asking for, so we can be sure if students have mastered it?
- Are our objectives specific and can they be addressed in a single lesson or will it take multiple lessons to master.
- Are our objectives content objectives or skill objectives? (In math they are often both concurrently.) That is do they develop a students’ knowledge-base by teaching important facts and knowledge or do they develop necessary abilities in reading, writing, calculating or problem-solving?
- As we plan we need to ask ourselves, are we checking to see if all the students are mastering the objective throughout the lesson and at the end?
- Are we integrating higher order thinking skills into our objectives? Are we pushing our students to apply, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate? Are we using higher order verbs in our objectives?

- DIRECTORS GIVE FEEDBACK TO LESSON PLANS ON A WEEKLY BASIS. Teachers submit their lesson plans on a weekly basis. Upon submission, teachers fill out a lesson plan dialogue sheet which is directly connected to the NSA Teaching Standards (see appendices). This dialogue sheet pushes teachers to evaluate the quality of their lessons prior to submission, and school leaders can give immediate feedback when reviewing the lesson plans. The dialogue sheet is as follows.

**LESSON PLANNING DIALOGUE SHEET:**

**Please review your plans before you submit them and check off the standards that apply:**

TEACHER	PERFORMANCE AREA #1--PLANNING AND PREPARING INSTRUCTION	SUPER-VISOR RESPONSE
	Are my lessons clearly aligned with both the content and skill objectives and North Star standards outlined in the curriculum?	
	Are my objectives clearly mastery objectives? Do they communicate exactly what my students are learning or will be able to do and not just what I am teaching?	
	Do my lessons have a variety of activities to keep the students engaged?	
	Have I selected and adapted appropriate learning materials and resources to help my students learn?	

	Have I outlined, in a step-by-step fashion, exactly what I and my students will do for the course of the period? Have I written with the clarity of a lab procedure?	
	Do I have the following components in my lesson? Do Now Activity? Oral Drill Activity?	
	Have I added specific Checking for Understanding activities?	
	Have I assigned daily homework that is directly connected to my objectives?	

**Please reflect and check any of the following that apply:**

- I would like to meet with Mr. Verrilli to talk about my plans
- I feel comfortable and confident about the plans that I have designed for the coming week.
- I would like Mr. Verrilli to informally observe me deliver the lesson I have designed for \_\_\_\_\_ (day/date) because \_\_\_\_\_.

TEACHER'S THOUGHTS / COMMENTS / QUESTIONS ON PLANS

MR. VERRILLI'S THOUGHTS / COMMENTS / QUESTIONS ON PLANS

- **QUALIFICATIONS OF SUPERVISORS.** The directors in charge of supervision and observation all are highly qualified to in their fields: two have principal certifications and one has supervisor certification.
- **TEACHER MENTORING PROGRAM.** In addition to the observation and supervision provided by the school directors, every new teacher is assigned a mentor—an experienced, effective teacher from within the school community. These mentors attend a school-led training session in the Summer session and contribute additional teacher support to their mentees. Mentors observe classes, co-teach classes, give feedback, and invite the mentee to observe them teach as well. The mentors create a crucial peer-to-peer feedback loop which increases the strength of the professional learning community throughout the entire school. Teacher mentors report directly to the school directors, keeping them informed on the progress and continued challenges for these new teachers.

## REVIEW OF STATE AND LOCAL ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES AND STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT RESULTS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE SCHOOL'S GOALS AND REQUIRED NCLB ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS

### *ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES: ACADEMIC GOALS AND OBJECTIVES*

#### **ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES: PREPARATION FOR COLLEGE AND BEYOND**

- **ANNUAL USE OF STANDARDIZED ASSESSMENTS:** North Star is very focused on ensuring that every child is adequately prepared to succeed in college and life beyond. To that end, North Star regularly assesses students' academic achievement to identify strengths and weakness in the school's overall program. Before each student begins their first year at the school, they are given a pre-test (TerraNova Survey). At the end of each school year, all students take the TerraNova Multiple Assessment or participate in the New Jersey Statewide Assessment Program (8<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade). In addition, all high school students take the PSAT and/or SAT.
- **EVALUATION & ANALYSIS OF ASSESSMENT RESULTS:** All test results are logged into a school database to track student progress over time. With the pre-test as a benchmark, North Star can effectively assess the "value-added" of the school: how much did the students grow beyond a typical year's worth of growth? (See Results section for the answer). Results are evaluated by the school directors, Board of Trustees, faculty members, parents, and even the students to help the school determine if it met its academic priority goals and to set new objectives for the following school year.
- **IMPLEMENTATION OF SCHOOL-WIDE PLAN TO MEET ACADEMIC GOALS/OBJECTIVES:** Once the academic goals have been set for the year, every component of the school program is directed towards those goals: adjustments to the North Star Assessments (see below), professional development plan (see Professional Development section), mentoring plan (see Professional Development section), curriculum adjustments (see NJCCCS section), and student goal-setting. Further details are listed in each section below.

#### **STATE ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES: GEPA AND HSPA**

- **100% OF NORTH STAR 8<sup>TH</sup> & 11<sup>TH</sup> GRADERS PARTICIPATE IN NEW JERSEY STATE ASSESSMENTS:** Since North Star is grades 5-12, students participate in the 8<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade state tests: Grade Eight Proficiency Assessment (GEPA) and the High School Proficiency Assessment (HSPA). In 2005 37 students took the GEPA exam and 22 students took the HSPA exam.

- **EVALUATION & ANALYSIS OF ASSESSMENT RESULTS:** All test results are logged into a school database to track student progress over time. Results are evaluated by the school directors, Board of Trustees, faculty members, parents, and even the students to help the school determine if it met its academic priority goals and to set new objectives for the following school year. North Star also compiles the results of its students on state tests taken prior to coming to North Star (NJASK 3 & NJASK 4), allowing the school to assess more accurately the value added of a North Star education.
- **IMPLEMENTATION OF SCHOOL-WIDE PLAN TO MEET ACADEMIC GOALS/OBJECTIVES:** Once the academic goals have been set for the year, every component of the school program is directed towards those goals: adjustments to the North Star Assessments (see below), professional development plan (see Professional Development section), mentoring plan (see Professional Development section), curriculum adjustments (see NJCCCS section), and student goal-setting. High school teachers evaluate 8<sup>th</sup> grade results to develop a summer entry plan preparing students for the adjustment to the high school curriculum. 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade teachers use the HSPA results to create an individualized education plan for each student who did not pass one or both sections of the HSPA. These plans drive the curriculum development and small group tutoring sessions provided for these students.

#### **STANDARDIZED ASSESSMENTS PROCEDURES: TERRANOVA**

- **ALL STUDENTS TAKE A TERRANOVA PRE-TEST UPON ENTERING THE SCHOOL:** In order to measure the performance of students prior to arriving at North Star, students take a pre-test from the previous school year. Thus, in September incoming 5<sup>th</sup> graders take a year-end 4<sup>th</sup> grade TerraNova exam. This enables North Star to measure “value-added” to the academic achievement of its students. Many schools erroneously test incoming students with an exam from the end of that school year (i.e., giving incoming 5<sup>th</sup> graders a year-end 5<sup>th</sup> grade exam). Such practices allow schools to show growth but avoid the true analysis of “value-added.”
- **ALL NON-STATE TESTING COHORTS TAKE A TERRANOVA TEST AT YEAR-END:** In May of each academic year, 5<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> graders and 9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> graders take the TerraNova Basic Multiple Assessment, Form C, and the TerraNova New Jersey GEPA/HSPA Custom. The TerraNova Basic Multiple Assessment gives North Star a norm-referenced score for each student, allowing the school to compare its academic results to the nation as a whole. The use of the Custom exam (added to the TerraNova exam) gives the school a criterion-referenced score for each student that measures proficiency on the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards. These scores also give a fairly accurate prediction of how students will perform on New Jersey state assessments. As seen in the Results section, North Star students make significant gains in proficiency on New Jersey standards as they progress within the school.



- **EVALUATION & ANALYSIS OF TERRANOVA RESULTS:** All test results are logged into a school database to track student progress over time. Results are evaluated by the school directors, Board of Trustees, faculty members, parents, and even the students to help the school determine if it met its academic priority goals and to set new objectives for the following school year. In addition to the global results analysis, TerraNova score reports allow for analysis of specific learning standards. School directors and faculty members evaluate progress standard by standard, noting specific areas of weakness (e.g., synthesizing information, two-step word problems, etc.)
- **IMPLEMENTATION OF SCHOOL-WIDE PLAN TO MEET ACADEMIC GOALS/OBJECTIVES:** Once the academic goals have been set for the year, every component of the school program is directed towards those goals: adjustments to the North Star Assessments (see below), professional development plan (see Professional Development section), mentoring plan (see Professional Development section), curriculum adjustments (see NJCCCS section), and student goal-setting. Results on the TerraNova Custom combined assessment are also used to determine placement in 8<sup>th</sup> grade Algebra.

#### **STANDARDIZED ASSESSMENTS PROCEDURES: SAT**

- **ALL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS TAKE THE PSAT IN 9<sup>TH</sup>—11<sup>TH</sup> GRADE:** In order to measure the performance of students on one of the most important measures used by colleges to determine college readiness, students take the PSAT in each of the first three years of their high school career. This enables North Star to measure “value-added” to the academic achievement of its students during high school.
- **ALL 11<sup>TH</sup> AND 12<sup>TH</sup> GRADERS TAKE THE SAT:** Starting in May of their junior year, North Star students take the SAT. As seniors, these scores are sent directly to the schools to which they are applying.
- **EVALUATION & ANALYSIS OF SAT RESULTS:** All test results are logged into a school database to track student progress over time. Results are evaluated by the school directors, Board of Trustees, faculty members, parents, and even the students to help the school determine if it met its academic priority goals and to set new objectives for the following school year. In addition to the global results analysis, PSAT score reports allow for analysis of specific learning standards. School directors and faculty members evaluate progress standard by standard, noting specific areas of weakness (e.g., finding supporting information, geometry word problems, etc.)
- **IMPLEMENTATION OF SCHOOL-WIDE PLAN TO MEET ACADEMIC GOALS/OBJECTIVES:** Once the academic goals have been set for the year, every component of the school program is directed towards those goals: adjustments to the North Star Assessments (see below), professional development plan (see Professional Development section), mentoring plan (see Professional Development section), curriculum adjustments (see NJCCCS section), and student goal-setting.

**NORTH STAR ASSESSMENT MODEL: THE SCHOOL ENTERED ITS 2<sup>ND</sup> YEAR OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE HIGHLY TOUTED DATA-DRIVEN INSTRUCTIONAL MODEL USING INTERIM ASSESSMENTS AND ANALYSIS.**

North Star continues to work towards greater excellence in student achievement. One of the main factors contributing to greater success in 2003-05 was the implementation of the North Star Assessment process. After studying a successful curriculum-based assessment model at Amistad Academy in New Haven, CT, North Star concluded that evaluating students once a year is not an effective measure for influencing instruction. Interim assessments are critical school-wide management tools that focus instruction on the specific standards and skills that students most need to learn. Thus, in the summer of 2003, North Star launched its own data-driven instruction and assessment model. An Assessment Committee wrote a total of 32 assessments that summer: four assessments each in math and literacy for grades 5-8. Each assessment was precisely aligned to New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards and the school's scope and sequence. The assessments also included additional standards/objectives that were important to the school. In the summer of 2004, the Assessment Committee created 24 additional assessments: four each for math (Algebra I, Geometry and Algebra II) and writing (9<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> grade). In the summer of 2005, the assessment committee added 12 reading assessments (9<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> grade) working backwards from SAT exams and Advanced Placement English exams. At the same time, high school Math assessments were adjusted to include more SAT-style questions and pre-AP questions. In subsequent years, the North Star Assessments will be continually adjusted to reflect the learning of its students, constantly setting higher achievement goals. To show how the North Star Assessment model functions, an assessment calendar is shown below:

NORTH STAR ASSESSMENT SCHEDULE 2004-2005		
TIME FRAME:	UNIT / ASSESSMENT:	NOTES:
6 Weeks (9/8-10/17)	Unit 1	
October 17, 2004	North Star Assessment #1	@ 1 hr/assessment
6.5 Weeks(10/20-12/5 )	Unit 2	
December 5, 2004	North Star Assessment #2	Cumulative: Units 1 & 2 (@ 1:20 hours/exam)
2 Weeks (12/8 –12/19)	RE-TEACH Objectives from NSA 1 & 2	Based on results analysis
6 Weeks (1/5 – 2/11)	Unit 3	
February 11, 2005	North Star Assessment #3	Units 1-3 (@ 1:40 hours)
1 Week (2/16 –2/20)	RE-TEACH Objectives from NSA 3	Based on results analysis
6 Weeks (2/23-4/2)	Unit 4	
March 31, 2005	North Star Assessment #4	Units 1-4 (@ 2 hrs/assessment)
1 Week (4/5 – 4/8)	RE-TEACH Objectives from NSA 4	Based on results analysis
4 Weeks (4/19 – 5/17)	Unit 5- TEST REVIEW/PREPARATION	Review of standards
May 17-May 24, 2005	TerraNova Testing	
4 Weeks (5/25- 6/18)	Unit 6	Final Performance Prep.
June 2005	Final Performance Tasks	Math and History/Language Arts
Summer Session 2005	RE-TEACH Objectives from NSA 4/ TerraNova results	Based on results analysis, student are grouped and taught specific skills of weakness
Summer Session 2005	Final Performance Tasks, Part 2	Final Performance Task repeats for any student who failed task in his/her first attempt

All the professional development in 2004-05 remained focused on data-driven instruction (see Teacher Leadership section). One of the most important elements of the model is the laser-like analysis of the results on each assessment. Attached to the Annual Report are a sample section from one exam and the accompanying data collection forms and analysis templates. Teachers and school leaders utilized these forms to analyze the results on each assessment, giving them much more immediate feedback about the quality of learning happening in the classroom. Teachers then took advantage of the “re-teach” weeks incorporated into the school calendar to develop new strategies for teaching the most challenging standards. History and Science teachers contributed to student achievement by focusing on standards that aligned well within their own curriculum (writing in History and Data analysis in Science). Given the success of the North Star Assessment model, a high school committee was formed in the summer of 2004 to develop similar math and literacy assessments.

#### **FINAL PERFORMANCE TASKS: NORTH STAR HAS DEVELOPED PERFORMANCE-BASED ASSESSMENTS TO COMPLEMENT**

As a complementary measure of student progress, the school has developed its own year-end performance-based assessments. Taken together, they give faculty, parents, students, trustees, the New Jersey Department of Education, and interested citizens a useful understanding of students’ cognitive development over time. The performance-based assessments are important in assessing areas that tests cannot, such as speaking/listening skills and the ability to synthesize major ideas and/or offer personal reflection. The themes of the performance-based assessments were as follows:

#### **MIDDLE SCHOOL:**

Grade:	Oral Final Performance Task (Public Speaking):	Written Final Performance Task:
5 <sup>th</sup>	Compare self to character from novel/person in ancient times and answer following question: How do people deal with change?	Multi-step problem: design and build fence (area, cost)
6 <sup>th</sup>	Analyze character/historical figure to answer following question: Can one person make a difference? Use historical and literary examples.	#1--Essay: Can one person make a difference? Use historical/literary examples. #2--Math: Paint a room – surface area, percent number sense, recipe creation, ratios/proportions
7 <sup>th</sup>	Life, Liberty and Happiness vs. Access to Resources and Power: What are the founding principles of America? OR: Trace a theme throughout the history and literature of America	#1--Essay: Can one person make a difference? #2--Math – Design a monument: measurement, volume, surface area, blue-prints, scale factor and model construction
8 <sup>th</sup>	What is power? OR: What is freedom? OR: Why is there intolerance?	#1--Theme essay: trace theme across all literature and history they studied #2--Math – Algebra exam

**HIGH SCHOOL:**

Grade:	Oral Final Performance Task:	Written Final Performance Task:
9 <sup>th</sup>	#1: The Development of Civilizations #2: Roundtable discussion on one of three central topics—including brief presentation and defense of thesis statement before peers and judges #3: Spanish Oral Final Exam #4: Biology: Conducted lab to demonstrate understanding of content learned throughout the year	#1: Year-long history portfolio that uses evidence to show connection, relevance, conjecture, and perspective #2: Thematic/analytical essays: three essential questions on identity
10 <sup>th</sup>	#1: English-History Roundtable on combined essays written in class #2: Spanish Oral Final Exam #3: Chemistry: Conducted lab to demonstrate understanding of content learned throughout the year	Combined essay on similar themes found in English and History
11 <sup>th</sup>	#1: English-History Roundtable on combined essays written in class #2: Spanish Oral Final Exam	#1: Combined essay on similar themes found in English and History #2: Year-long history portfolio that uses evidence to show connection, relevance, conjecture, and perspective
12 <sup>th</sup>	#1: Senior Thesis oral defense #2: Ecology/Environmental Science Symposium	Senior Research Project (20 page research paper around self-created thesis).

**REPORT SYSTEM/REPORT CARDS.**

- PARENTS PICK UP REPORT CARDS AT SCHOOL. All North Star parents picked up their children's report cards at the end of each trimester during the school year. At that time, all faculty members were available to discuss with parents their children's progress. Parents also attended teacher-scheduled conferences during trimester mid-points, for updates on their children's work:

- ✓ Parent Conference Night (10/21/04)\*
  - ✓ Parent Report Card Night (12/16/04)—94% attendance
  - ✓ Parent Conference Night (2/3/05)\*
  - ✓ Parent Report Card Night (3/23/05)—95% attendance
  - ✓ Parent Conference Night (5/5/05)\*
  - ✓ Parent Report Card Night (7/6/05)—85% attendance
- \*Attendance required only of parents whose children are in danger of failing*

**ACCOUNTABILITY.**

A cornerstone of the North Star Academy is accountability for results. Overall supervision of the process remains the responsibility of the Charter School Lead Person and Co-Director, Paul Bambrick-Santoyo. Bambrick-Santoyo is recognized by two of the top urban principal training programs (New Leaders for New Schools, Building Excellent Schools) as an expert in the field of data-driven instruction and assessment, having given workshops to principals across the country. He personally ensures accurate data collection, disaggregation, interpretation, analysis, and presentation to the school community and to the public at large.

Once the testing data has been properly assembled, all members of the school community participate in analyzing and drawing conclusions (see State Testing, TerraNova and SAT sections above).

## *ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES: NON-ACADEMIC GOALS & OBJECTIVES*

### **ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES: NORTH STAR CONTINUALLY EVALUATES PERFORMANCE ON NON-ACADEMIC GOALS.**

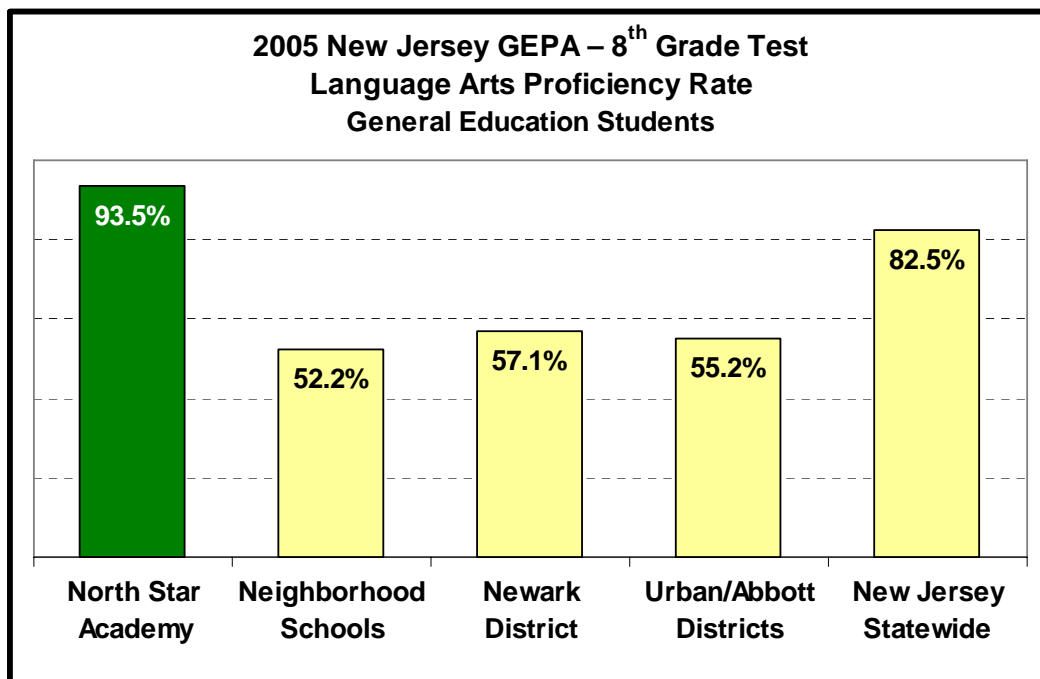
- **ANNUAL ASSESSMENT OF NON-ACADEMIC GOALS:** In addition to academic student achievement results, North Star measures many other factors on an annual basis to determine success toward the main objective of ensuring that every child is adequately prepared to succeed in college and life beyond. In accordance with the school's self-evaluation and accountability plan, those factors include but are not limited to:
  - ✓ market demand and enrollment stability (enrollment, waiting list, mobility rate, transfer rate, annual return rate, and cumulative stability index)
  - ✓ successful life/school outcomes (high school placement, high school graduation, college placement and graduation, violence and vandalism report, suspension rates, student promotion rate, student attendance)
  - ✓ community satisfaction (parent involvement, teacher attendance, teacher turnover, student/parent/teacher surveys)
  - ✓ strong fiscal management (thorough, comprehensive audits)
- **EVALUATION & ANALYSIS OF NON-ACADEMIC RESULTS:** All of the factors mentioned above are measured and logged into a school database to track the school's progress over time. With previous years and district/state numbers as a benchmark, North Star can effectively assess the "value-added" of the school: how much did the school increase, maintain, or decrease its quality in these areas? (See Results section for the answer). Results are evaluated by the school directors, Board of Trustees, faculty members, parents, and even the students to help the school determine if it met its non-academic priority goals.
- **IMPLEMENTATION OF SCHOOL-WIDE PLAN TO MEET NON-ACADEMIC GOALS/OBJECTIVES:** Once the data has been collected around the non-academic goals, the school is able to identify areas in need of improvement. From that point forward, every component of the school program is directed towards those goals: professional development plan (see Professional Development section), mentoring plan (see Professional Development section), and student/teacher/community goal-setting. Further details are listed in each section below.

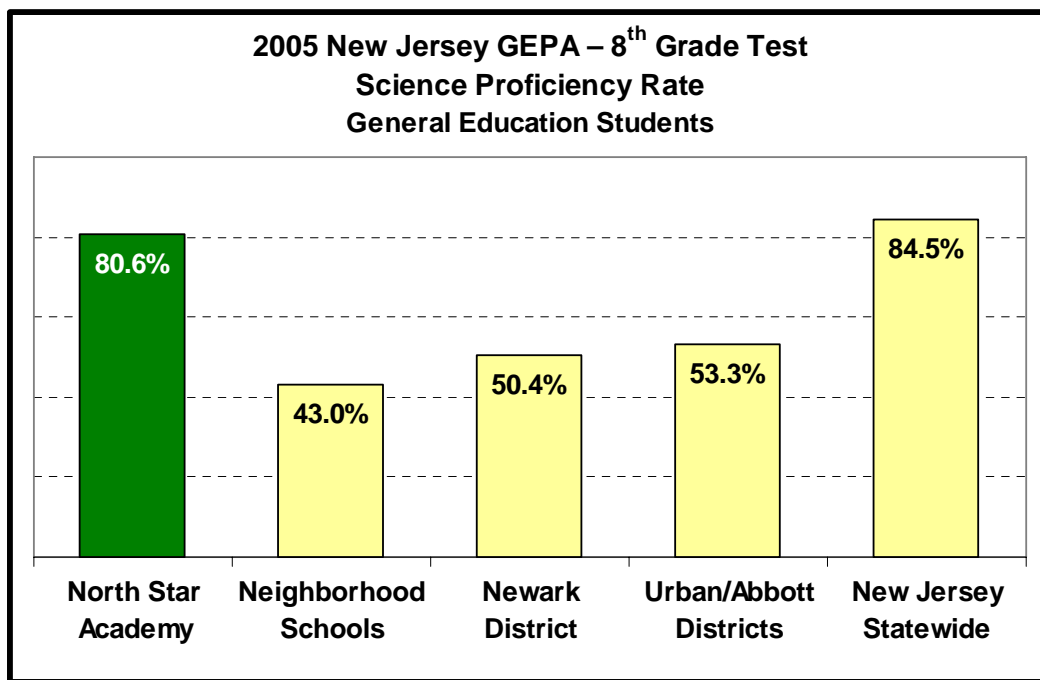
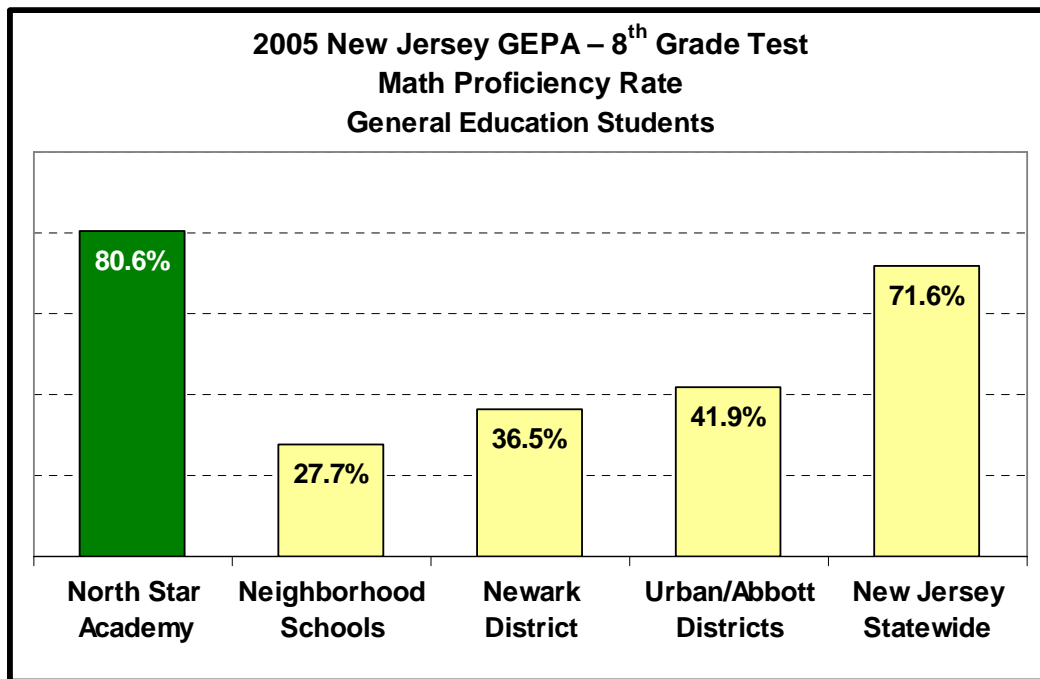
## CLOSING THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP: ASSESSMENT RESULTS

### **NORTH STAR ACADEMY STUDENTS OUTPERFORMED THEIR PEERS STATEWIDE ON THE GEPA IN 2005.**

This past March, North Star's 8<sup>th</sup> graders became the sixth cohort to take the Grade Eight Proficiency Assessment (GEPA), a criterion-referenced test that evaluates three core content areas: Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science.

A more detailed look at the results from 2005 can provide insights into this past year's performance. As of this writing, the 2005 results for urban districts as a whole have not yet been made public. For the moment the 2004 urban districts results are a useful benchmark alongside the 2005 results for North Star, Newark and the state. In that context, 85.3% of all North Star's 8<sup>th</sup> graders achieved proficiency or higher on the Language Arts portion of the GEPA (2<sup>nd</sup> highest performing school among Newark's 41 middle schools), 73.5% succeeded in Math (double the Newark average), and 73.5% succeeded in Science (3<sup>rd</sup> highest performing school in Newark). To understand North Star's results more easily, the performance of the general education students is displayed graphically below:





To have an even better sense of the impact of North Star on its students, a neighborhood schools index is displayed in the charts above. The neighborhood school percentage shows what the 8<sup>th</sup> grade students might have achieved without a North Star education (the index is created by weighting the scores of the middle schools that North Star students would have attended based on geographic location).



These results remain similarly significant when disaggregated by race, income, and disability. In achieving these results, North Star students significantly outperformed the NCLB Adequate Yearly Progress Starting Points in every category and sub-category:

GEPA Results						
Disaggregated*	Language Arts		Mathematics		Science	
GROUP (# of students):	% tested:	% Proficient	% tested:	% Proficient:	% tested:	% Proficient:
All students (35)	100.0%	85.3%	100.0%	73.5%	100.0%	73.5%
African-American (28)	100.0%	85.2%	100.0%	70.4%	100.0%	70.4%
Latino (6)	100.0%	83.3%	100.0%	83.3%	100.0%	83.3%
Disabilities (3)	100.0%	**	100.0%	**	100.0%	**
Free/reduced lunch (30):	100.0%	92.3%	100.0%	84.6%	100.0%	80.8%

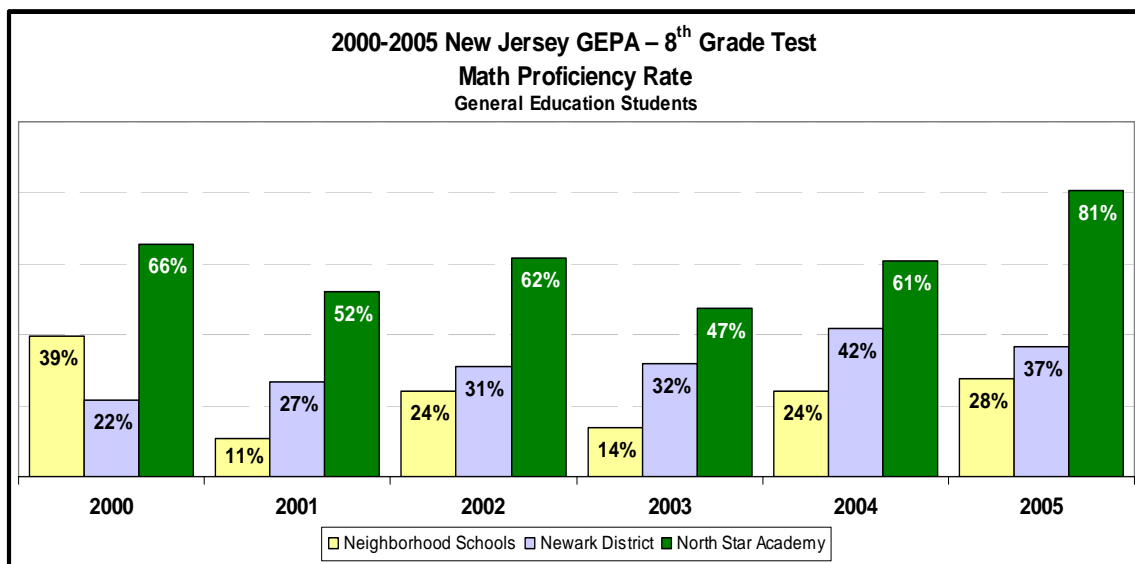
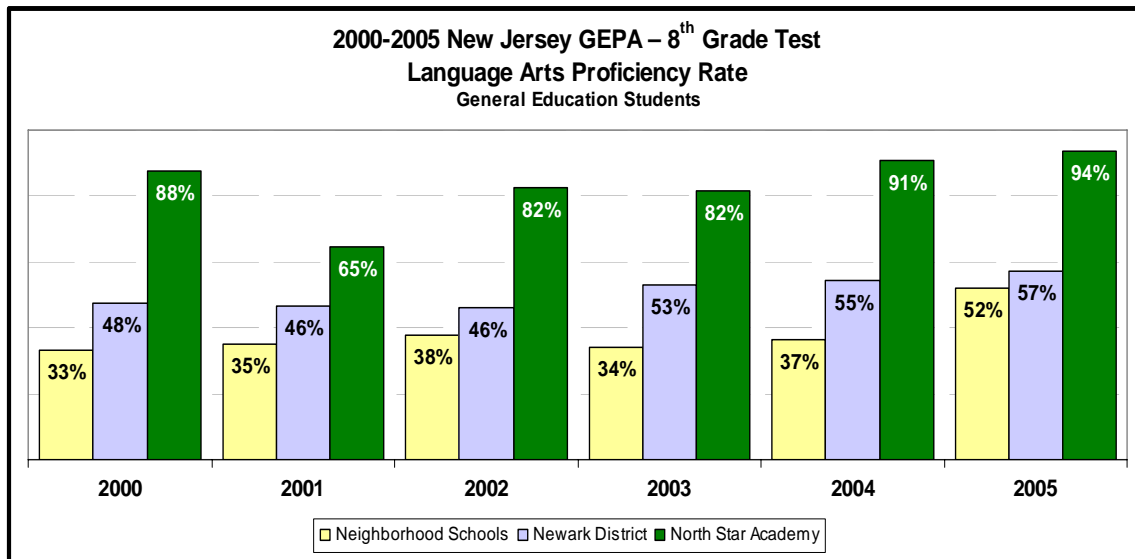
\*Disaggregated results follow NCLB regulations and do not include three students who started after September 1, 2004 (less than one year in district).

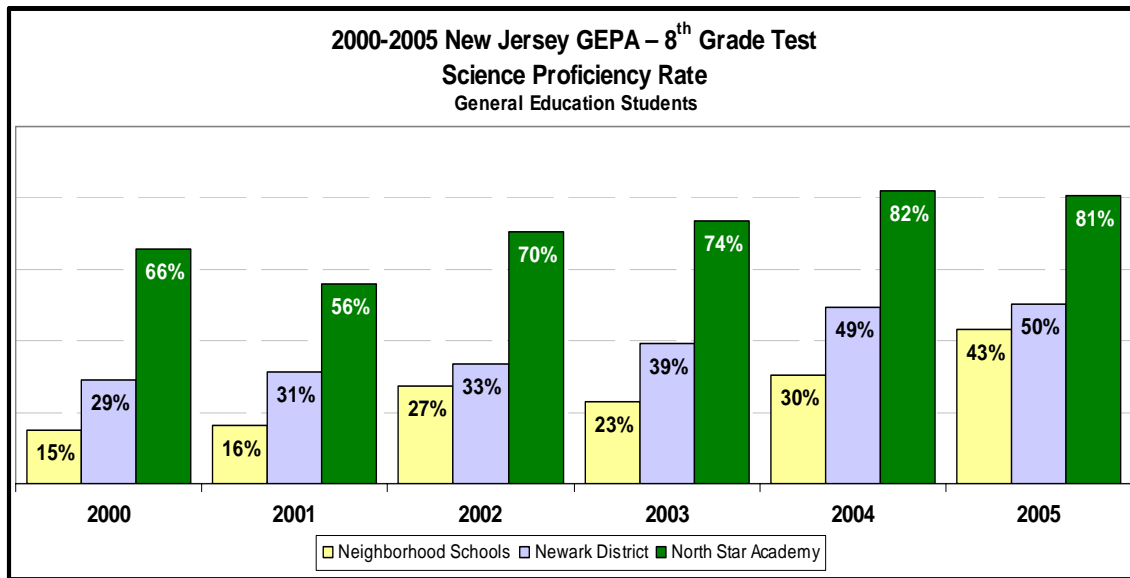
\*\*Subgroup too small to be statistically significant and thus not to be considered for AYP considerations.

As can be seen, North Star effectively closed the achievement gap between urban students and the rest of the state. In almost every category, North Star's 8<sup>th</sup> graders practically doubled the Newark average and performed higher than the statewide average.

#### **NORTH STAR 8<sup>TH</sup> GRADERS HAVE OUTPERFORMED THEIR NEWARK COUNTERPARTS ON THE GEPA FOR FIVE CONSECUTIVE YEARS.**

With five years of data, there's a consistent trend of North Star students significantly narrowing the achievement gap (and recently eliminating it) between urban schools and the rest of the state. The results also show fairly consistent school improvement over time. North Star consistently outperforms the Newark district as well as the specific neighborhood schools that the students would have attended if they had not come to North Star. The following charts and graphs highlight that consistent performance that North Star has established. Note that the data on the charts below represent the publicly-reported general education student data:





GEPA --MEAN SCORES Cut score=200 (General Ed.)	North Star Academy 2000	North Star Academy 2001	North Star Academy 2002	North Star Academy 2003	North Star Academy 2004	North Star Academy 2005	Newark Students (2004)
Language Arts	221.3	214.1	214.5	213.0	216.7	220.5	202.6
Mathematics	212.1	207.7	212.5	204.4	207.1	218.4	192.4
Science	212.2	208.9	212.6	214.7	217.3	222.7	202.1

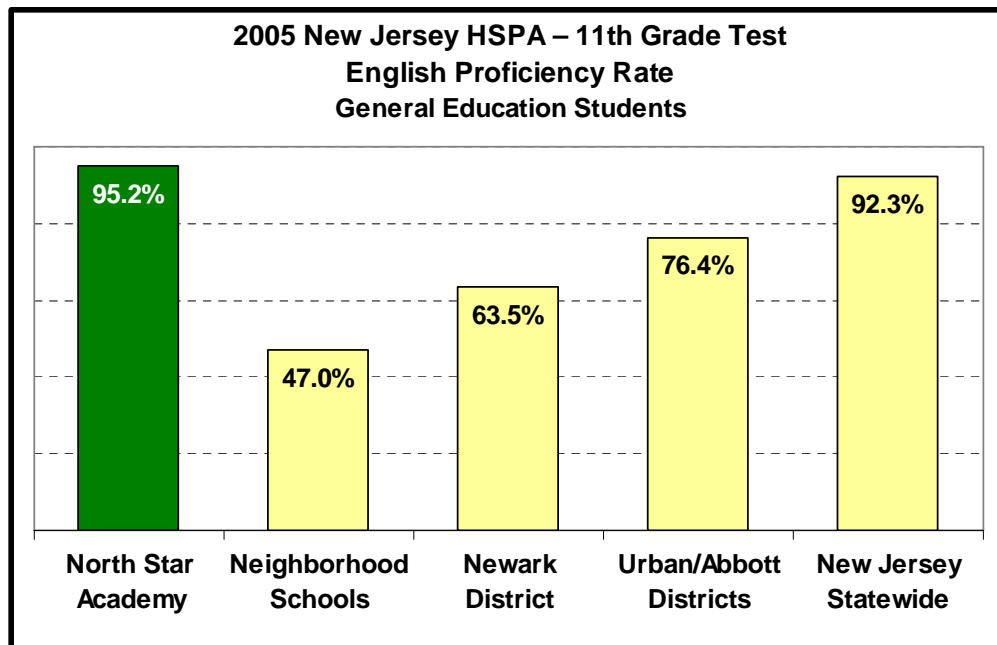
The continued success of North Star can also be seen in students who qualify for a free/reduced lunch:

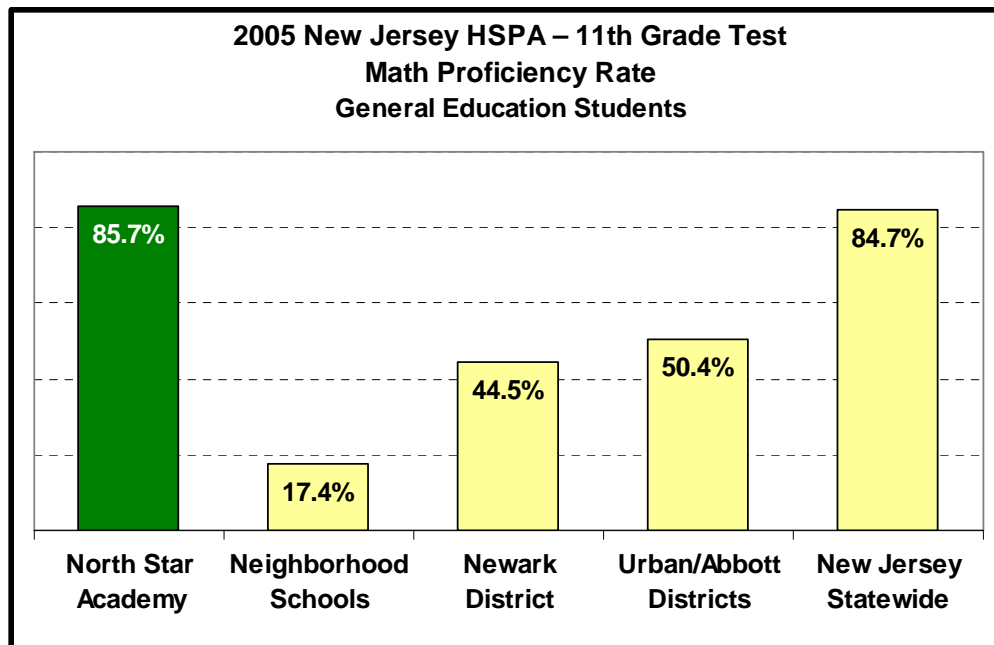
GEPA Pass Rate FREE/REDUCED LUNCH (General Ed.)	North Star Academy 2000	North Star Academy 2001	North Star Academy 2002	North Star Academy 2003	North Star Academy 2004	North Star Academy 2005	All Newark Students (2000-04)
Language Arts	86.7%	64.5%	80.0%	82.4%	88.2%		46.7%
Mathematics	66.7%	51.6%	60.0%	44.1%	58.8%	%	26.7%
Science	66.7%	58.1%	66.7%	70.6%	79.4%	%	31.0%

Given the notable improvement in results over the past two years, North Star plans to continue its successful 2004-05 professional development plan focused on data-driven instruction and include departmental work on guided reading and mathematical conceptual understanding (see “Teacher Leadership”). During the Summer of 2005, the school’s Assessment Committee continued the work of designing six-week internal assessments directly aligned with the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards in Math and Reading/Language Arts. North Star is optimistic that these activities will continue to improve results in both of these areas.

**NORTH STAR 11<sup>TH</sup> GRADERS HAVE OUTPERFORMED THEIR NEWARK COUNTERPARTS ON THE HIGH SCHOOL PROFICIENCY ASSESSMENT (HSPA).**

This past March, North Star's 11<sup>th</sup> graders (21 general education students and 1 special education student) became the third cohort to take the High School Proficiency Assessment (HSPA), a criterion-referenced, standards-based test that evaluates two core content areas: Language Arts and Mathematics. The results show North Star significantly outperforming the Newark district and other urban districts and surpassing the state in most categories as well. As the 2005 urban district HSPA results have not yet been released, the 2004 scores sit as a placeholder for 2005 comparison purposes. With 95.2% proficiency in Language Arts and 85.7% proficiency in Mathematics among general education students, North Star is the highest performing non-selective high school in Newark and the highest performing non-selective urban high school in the state of New Jersey. While selective high schools draw the highest achieving students in Newark, North Star takes a random lottery of students who underperform the already low district average. Contrary to the common assumption that charter schools "cream" students, North Star is actually serving students below the district average. The neighborhood school percentage in the charts below shows what North Star students might have achieved without a North Star education (the index is created by weighting the scores of the high schools that North Star students would have attended based on geographic location):





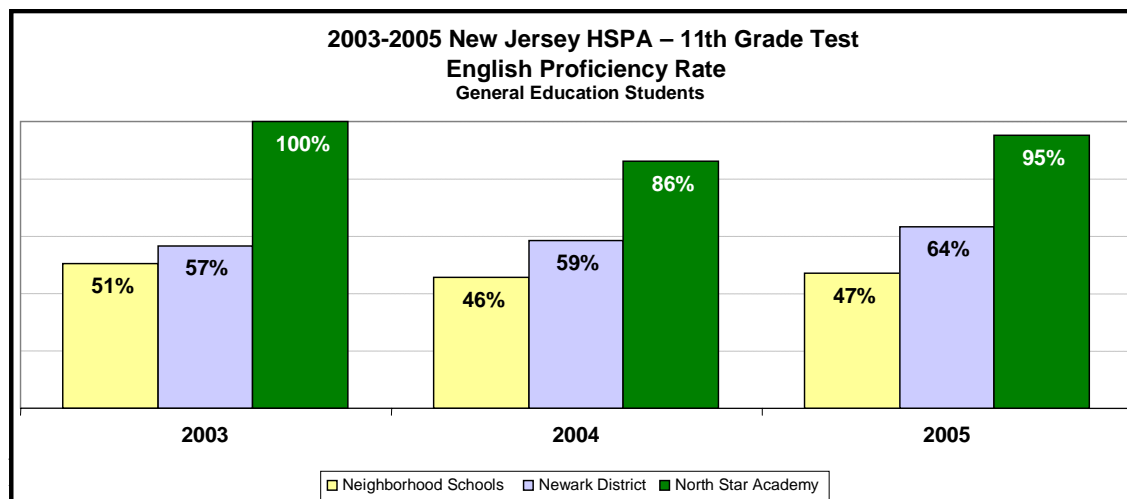
The numbers are as impressive when broken down by race and income. Once again, these results significantly surpass the minimal NCLB Adequate Yearly Progress requirements:

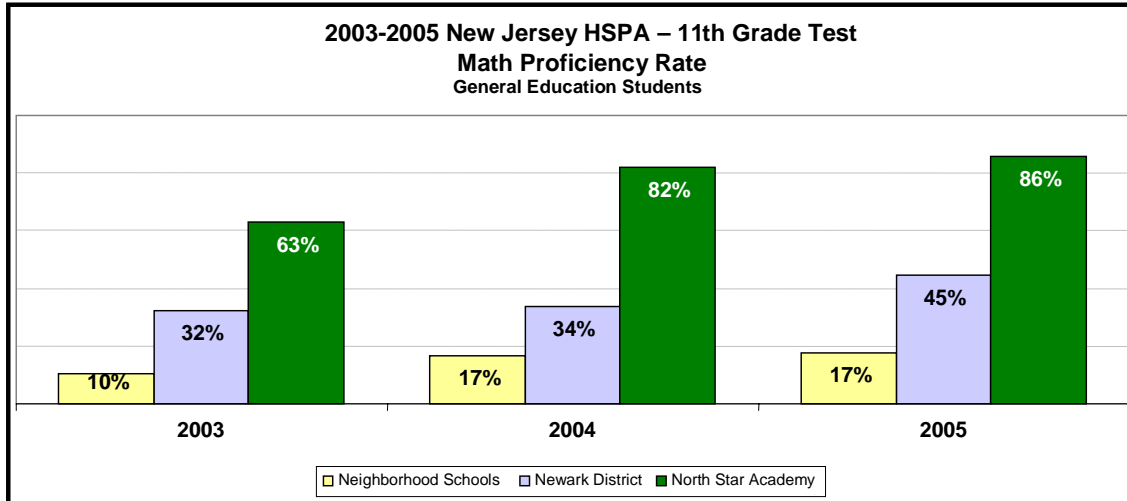
HSPA Results Disaggregated				
		Language Arts		Mathematics
GROUP (# of students):	% tested:	% Proficient	% tested:	% Proficient:
All students (22)	100.0%	90.9%	100.0%	86.4%
African-American (22)	100.0%	90.9%	100.0%	86.4%
Disabilities (1)	100.0%	*	100.0%	*
Free/reduced lunch (18):	100.0%	94.4%	100.0%	88.9%

*\*Subgroup too small to be statistically significant and thus not to be considered for AYP considerations.*

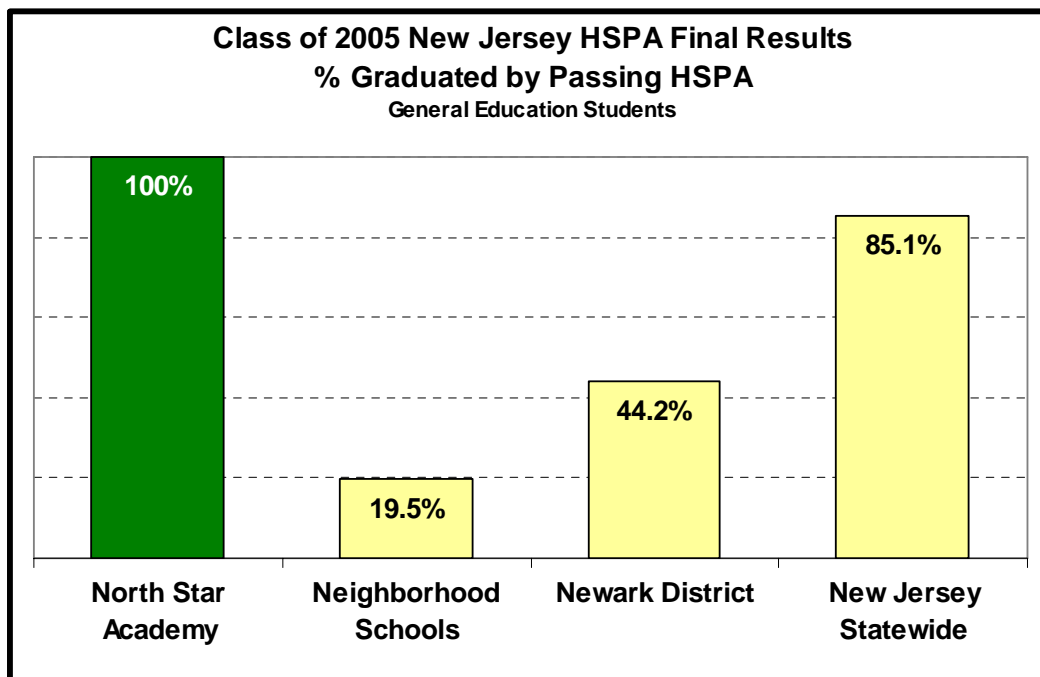
**NORTH STAR 11<sup>TH</sup> GRADERS HAVE OUTPERFORMED THEIR NEWARK COUNTERPARTS ON THE HSPA FOR THREE CONSECUTIVE YEARS.**

With three years of data, there's a consistent trend of North Star students eliminating the achievement gap between urban schools and the rest of the state: The results also show consistent excellence in Language Arts and continued school improvement in Mathematics:





Another measure of North Star's high school performance can be seen in the results of the graduating 12<sup>th</sup> grade. Passing both the Literacy and Math components of the HSPA is a requirement for graduation. Thus, any student who fails either part of the HSPA must take it again in their senior year. If they continue failing, they must graduate through an alternative process called Special Review Assessment (SRA). Only 84.6% of New Jersey general education students graduate by passing the HSPA, and only 35.3% of Newark general education students reach that achievement. North Star is proud to note that 100% of its regular education students passed the HSPA, far outstripping the results of the district and the state. The charts below highlight the achievements of the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders:



**NORTH STAR 11<sup>TH</sup> AND 12<sup>TH</sup> GRADERS PERFORMED COMPARATIVELY WELL ON THE SAT (STANDARDIZED ACHIEVEMENT TEST).**

North Star 12<sup>th</sup> graders were the second cohort to take the Standardized Achievement Test (SAT). The average score for the first two years was 940, with scores ranging from 720 to 1140. To put these numbers into context, we can compare these scores to Newark high schools in 2004. If all Newark high schools perform similarly in 2005, North Star would have the second highest scores, behind only Science High — a high school with selective admissions—and ahead of the two other selective high schools. Nonetheless, North Star continues to look for ways to reach a minimum average of 1000 – the national average on the SAT. The results follow:

SAT -- 2004 & 2005 NEWARK SCHOOLS	% of Students Taking SAT	Average Math Score	Average Verbal Score	AVERAGE TOTAL SCORE	Ward/School Type
Science High	98%	513	483	996	Magnet
NORTH STAR ACADEMY	100%	448	438	940	Charter
University High	94%	442	434	876	Magnet
Arts High	85%	409	420	829	Magnet
Technology High	70%	396	389	785	North
East Side High	41%	407	368	775	East
NEWARK DISTRICT AVERAGE	53%	393	381	774	DISTRICT
Malcolm X Shabazz High	49%	344	327	671	South
Weequahic	51%	333	336	669	South
West Side High	49%	344	345	689	West
Barringer	27%	358	354	712	North
Central	59%	347	330	677	Central

**NORTH STAR 5<sup>TH</sup>, 6<sup>TH</sup> AND 7<sup>TH</sup> GRADE STUDENTS SHOWED IMPRESSIVE GROWTH ON THE TERRANOVA STANDARDIZED ACHIEVEMENT TESTS.**

Given the fact that the state tests are only offered in 4<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grades, these instruments do not track the improvement North Star students make over the course of the four years in middle school. In 2002-03, North Star began the transition from the use of Stanford Nine to the TerraNova achievement test. The TerraNova assessments serve a two-fold purpose. First, they give us a sense of how well North Star students are performing relative to students nationwide. Second, the TerraNova assessment can be combined with a New Jersey Custom supplement to measure student performance explicitly on New Jersey's core curriculum content standards. The TerraNova/Custom combination appears to be far more closely aligned with the New Jersey state exams than the Stanford Nine. This correlation allows North Star to make better diagnoses of students' proficiency before 8<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade, thus creating more specific plans of actions to address areas of concern.

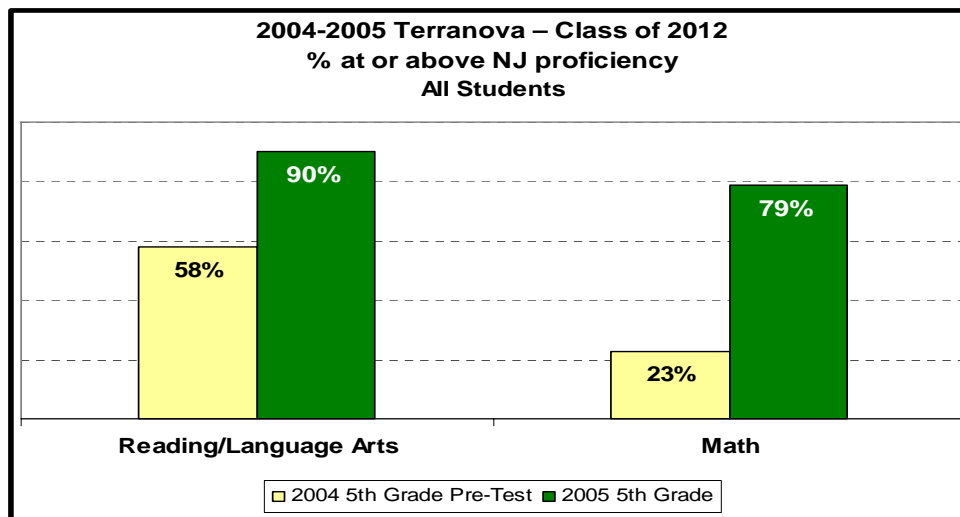
In 2003-04, North Star teachers made impressive gains in all subjects in all grade levels. Even more remarkably, in 2004-05, North Star teachers surpassed the impressive gains of the previous year. One graph and two charts are presented for each cohort:



- Graph: “Percentage of students proficient or higher” as measured by NJ standards--directly comparable to passing rates on the GEPA and the HSPA,
- Table 1: “Percentage above the national average”--students above the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile nationwide, and
- Table 2: “Mean normal curve equivalent”--compares students to the nation.

In looking at these results, one must keep in mind that each result represents year-end results on the test at that grade level. An average student would be predicted to show no growth on the TerraNova exam, because the exam already accounts for a year’s worth of academic growth. For example, if a student scored in the 56<sup>th</sup> percentile in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade, s/he would be expected to score in the 56<sup>th</sup> percentile in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade with a normal year’s worth of education. Thus, any score increase signifies more than a year’s worth of academic growth, and score increases of as high as 30 points are very impressive:

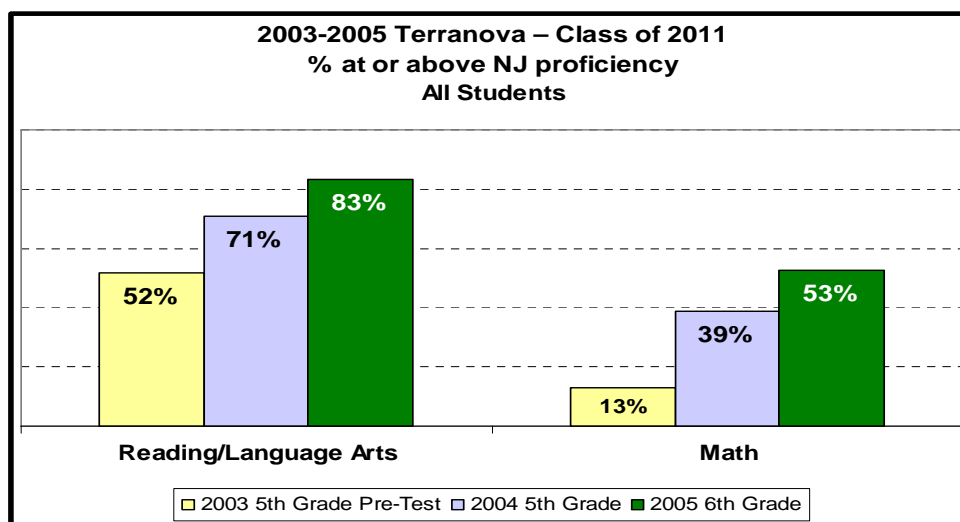
#### 5<sup>TH</sup> GRADE RESULTS:



Class of 2012 (5th grade) -- % at or above national average			
TERRANOVA N=62 students	2004 5 <sup>th</sup> Grade Pre-Test	2005 5th grade	Cumulative (1 Year) CHANGE
Reading	35.5%	69.4%	+ 33.9
Language	38.7%	72.6%	+ 33.9
Math	58.1%	79.0%	+ 21.0

Class of 2012 (5th grade) -- Mean normal curve equivalent			
TERRANOVA N=62 students	2004 5 <sup>th</sup> Grade Pre-Test	2005 5th grade	Cumulative (1 Year) CHANGE
Reading	44.5%	57.5%	+ 13.1
Language	44.7%	61.4%	+ 16.7
Math	52.0%	66.1%	+ 14.0

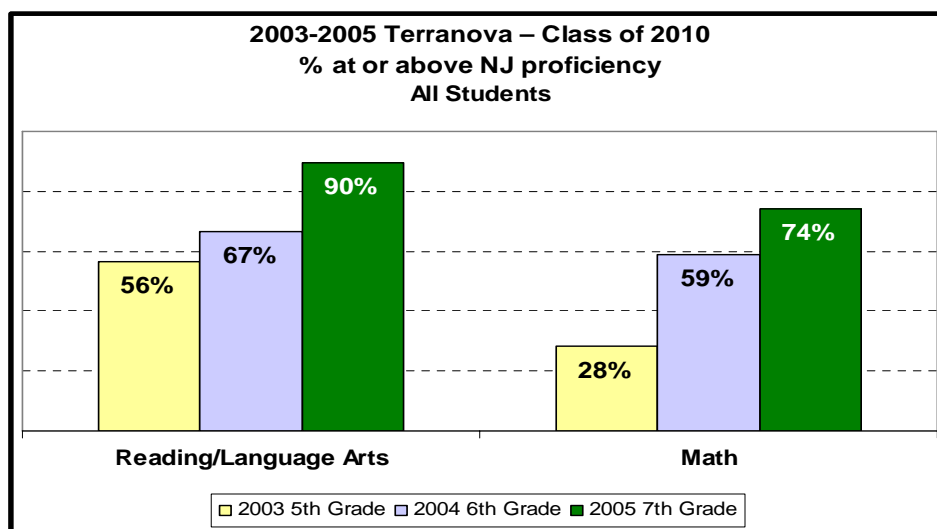
# 6<sup>TH</sup> GRADE RESULTS:



Class of 2011 (6th grade) -- % at or above national average				
TERRANOVA N=42 students	2003 4 <sup>th</sup> Grade Pre-Test	2004 5th grade	2005 6th grade	Cumulative (2 Yr) CHANGE
Reading	26.5%	50.0%	61.1%	+ 34.6
Language	14.7%	44.1%	80.6%	+ 65.8
Math	23.5%	47.1%	63.9%	+ 40.4

Class of 2011 (6th grade) -- Mean normal curve equivalent				
TERRANOVA N=42 students	2003 4 <sup>th</sup> Grade Pre-Test	2004 5th grade	2005 6th grade	Cumulative (2 Yr) CHANGE
Reading	40.3%	46.2%	53.3%	+ 12.9
Language	39.3%	49.4%	63.3%	+ 24.0
Math	39.1%	49.7%	56.7%	+ 17.6

## 7<sup>TH</sup> GRADE RESULTS:



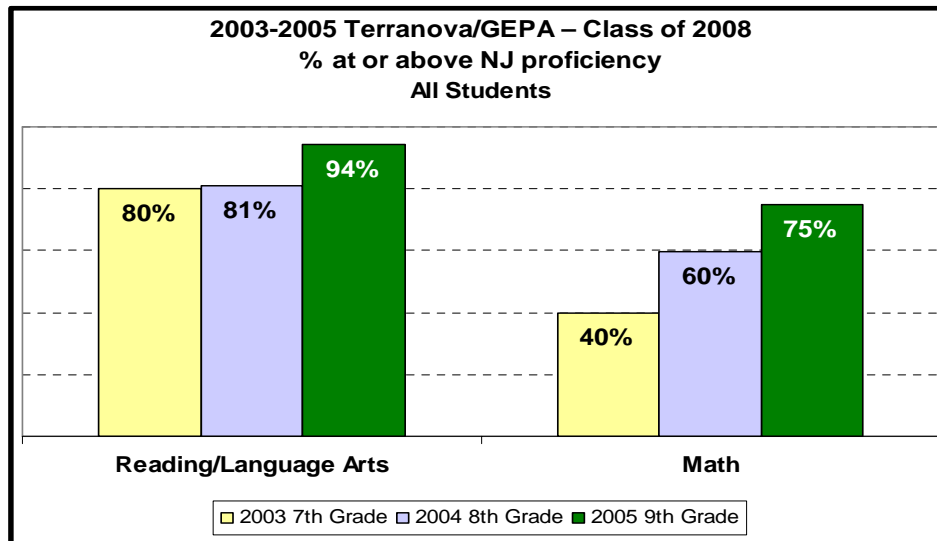
Class of 2010 (7th grade) -- % at or above national average				
TERRANOVA N=39 students	2003 5th grade	2004 6th grade	2005 7th grade	Cumulative (2 Yr) CHANGE
Reading	40.5%	45.9%	61.5%	+ 21.0
Language	43.2%	81.1%	92.3%	+ 49.1
Math	29.7%	59.5%	76.9%	+ 47.2

Class of 2010 (7th grade) -- Mean normal curve equivalent				
TERRANOVA N=39 students	2003 5th grade	2004 6th grade	2005 7th grade	Cumulative (2 Yr) CHANGE
Reading	45.6%	50.4%	52.9%	+ 7.3
Language	46.5%	69.5%	66.0%	+ 19.5
Math	42.4%	56.1%	68.0%	+ 25.6

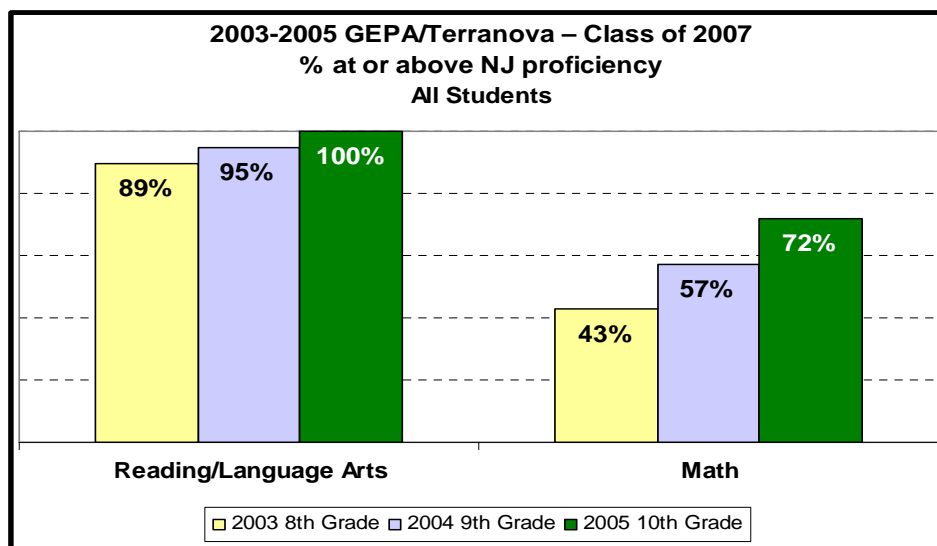
## NORTH STAR 9<sup>TH</sup> AND 10<sup>TH</sup> GRADE STUDENTS DEMONSTRATED PREPARATION FOR THE HIGH-STAKES GRADUATION ASSESSMENTS.

9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> graders also took the TerraNova exam, providing insight into their academic performance and predicting future proficiency on the High School Proficiency Assessment (HSPA). As a tool of analysis, 9<sup>th</sup> grade scores are compared to performance on the 8<sup>th</sup> grade state assessment to see if continued growth has occurred:

**9<sup>TH</sup> GRADE RESULTS:**



**10<sup>TH</sup> GRADE RESULTS:**



North Star looks forward to continuing to make strong progress in literacy and math every year.

## NON-ACADEMIC GOALS RESULTS: SCHOOL/LIFE OUTCOMES, DEMAND, STABILITY, SATISFACTION, & FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

### **MARKET DEMAND AND ENROLLMENT STABILITY REMAIN HIGH.**

- **STRONG MARKET DEMAND:** Over eight years, more than 950 have attended informational Open House Nights and over 2,000 have applied for their children to enroll at North Star. As indicated earlier in the Annual Report, more than 1,600 students are registered on the North Star waiting list. These increased numbers are even more impressive considering the fact the North Star added 75 additional 5<sup>th</sup> graders in the 2005-2006 school year.
- **ENROLLMENT STABILITY:** Overall stability indicators show that annual mobility and mid-year transfer remain consistently low. The middle school mobility rate in 2004-05 is slightly skewed due to the departure of four students at the same time in April. When not including those students, the numbers are remarkably similar to previous years. A few select students are leaving after middle school to attend selective high schools, and others are leaving in the high school years rather than face retention. Overall, 21 students – or about 9% of middle school graduates – have left North Star for selective public or private high schools; eight of them have earned full four-year scholarships to independent schools.

STABILITY INDICATORS	1997-8	1998-9	1999-0	2000-1	2001-2	2002-3 M.S.	2002-3 H.S.	2003-4 M.S.	2003-4 H.S.	2004-5 M.S.	2004-5 H.S.
ENROLLMENT Maximum allowable enrollment	72	108	144	180	216	159	79	166	104	183	115
ANNUAL MOBILITY RATE: % of students who enter/leave from 10/15 to 6/30	2.8%	0%	1.4%	2.8%	3.7%	4.4%	6.3%	3.7%	3.8%	9.3%	3.5%
MID-YR TRANSFER RATE: % of students who leave during yr – 9/1 to 7/30	2.8%	0%	1.4%	5.5%	5.1%	2.5%	6.3%	1.8%	1.9%	6.0%	2.6%
ANNUAL RETURN RATE % of students returning 9/1 from previous 9/1	--	95.8%	100%	94.4%	94.4%	94.4%	94.4%	91.7%	80.7%	91.3%	89.4%

- **LOW MOBILITY:** Low mobility numbers are generally considered indicators of a school's stability and parent/student satisfaction. As a point of comparison, the following table shows the statewide mobility rate, as well as a rate based on the average of the four Newark District schools that send the most students to North Star:

MOBILITY RATE (Avg Elem/MS)	North Star Academy	State of New Jersey	Newark District Schools (Selected)
2004-2005	9.3%	TBA	TBA
2003-2004	3.7%	12.8%	25.9%
2002-2003	4.4%	13.4%	28.8%
2001-2002	3.7%	13.8%	33.8%
2000-2001	2.8%	13.4%	34.4%
1999-2000	1.4%	14.3%	36.8%
1998-1999	0%	15.5%	37.5%
1997-1998	2.7%	14.9%	34.8%

MOBILITY RATE (Avg High School)	North Star Academy	State of New Jersey	Newark District High Schools
2004-2005	3.5%	TBA	TBA
2003-2004	3.8%	10.8%	30.6%
2002-2003	6.3%	10.9%	34.0%
2001-2002	3.7%	12.0%	25.2%
2000-2001	2.8%	13.4%	26.3%

#### **NORTH STAR STUDENTS HAVE BUILT SUCCESSFUL SCHOOL AND LIFE OUTCOMES.**

**100% TO COLLEGE: PLACEMENT, GUIDANCE AND PREPARATION:** The Classes of 2004 and 2005 set a high standard in the college admissions process. Some of the highlights are listed:

- **100% COLLEGE MATRICULATION OF FIRST TWO GRADUATING CLASSES:** One hundred percent of the first two graduating classes matriculated at a college or university—92% are at four-year colleges/universities. As of this reading, 97% of those students (all but one) are still currently in college. To give a point of comparison, according to the New Jersey 2004 Report Card, only 26% of the graduating seniors in Newark public schools “plan” on attending a four-year college (many experts believe that only half of those actually go on to attend four-year colleges; there is no formal tracking of those students). North Star Academy alumni are currently matriculated at the following colleges and universities:

- ✓ University of Chicago (1)
- ✓ Rutgers University (9)
- ✓ NJ Institute of Technology (3)
- ✓ Mount Holyoke College (1)
- ✓ Spelman College (1)
- ✓ Syracuse University (2)
- ✓ Seton Hall (1)
- ✓ Ramapo College (2)
- ✓ St. Peter’s (3)
- ✓ College of St. Elizabeth (1)
- ✓ Montclair State (1)
- ✓ Amherst (1)
- ✓ Boston College (4)
- ✓ Bates College (1)
- ✓ American Acad. of Dramatic Arts (1)
- ✓ College of New Jersey (1)
- ✓ New Jersey City University (1)
- ✓ Morgan State (1)
- ✓ Globe Institute of Technology (1)
- ✓ Kean University (1)
- ✓ Berkeley (1)
- ✓ Essex County College (2)

- **100% COLLEGE ACCEPTANCES:** 100% of both senior classes were accepted at a college or university. The classes of 2004 and 2005 received an average of five acceptance letters per student. In addition to where they matriculated, some other noteworthy college acceptances are listed below:
 

✓ Morehouse College	✓ Xavier University
✓ Temple University	✓ American University
✓ University of Vermont	✓ NY Institute of Technology
✓ Canisius College	✓ Siena College
✓ Drexel University	✓ Shippensburg University
✓ Farleigh Dickinson University	✓ Randolph-Macon Women's College
✓ Fordham University	✓ Virginia Wesleyan University
✓ University of Florida	
✓ St. John's University	
- **78% OF ORIGINAL FOUNDING STUDENTS OF NORTH STAR ARE CURRENTLY IN COLLEGE:** As part of its self-evaluation efforts, North Star has tracked all former students of the Classes of 2004 and 2005—those who left for private scholarship high schools, those who moved out of Newark, and those who left to attend other schools. Although North Star has maintained an extremely low mobility rate (most often only 3% each year), over the course of eight years that signifies a number of students who did not finish their academic careers at North Star. Of all of the students who began with the Class of 2004, 74% are currently in college. Of the students who began with the Class of 2005, 84% are currently in college or are college bound (taking a little longer to finish HS). To give a stark comparison to Newark high schools alone, only 50% of those students who start a Newark high school actually graduate, and only 13% claim that they want to attend a four-year college. If expert estimates are correct, only approximately 7% of Newark students who started high school end up in four-year colleges. If there were formal mechanisms to track students from the 5<sup>th</sup> grade (as North Star has done), those numbers would be even more drastic.
- **\$650,000 IN COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIPS AND GRANTS:** North Star students were offered approximately \$650,000 in institutional merit scholarships (e.g., the James Dickinson Carr Scholarship at Rutgers University) and scholarships through private foundations (e.g., The Community Foundation of New Jersey) — an average of more than \$18,000 in scholarship aid per student. In addition, 95% of the students attending New Jersey State institutions received EOF funding, which significantly reduced their college costs.

#### HIGH STANDARDS FOR CHARACTER AND BEHAVIOR:

- Continued enforcement of high standards has helped to lower incidents of suspension and in-house suspension over the past four years. The lower numbers for 2004-05 are particularly impressive given that North Star implemented a more rigorous system of expectations for student behavior.

<b>SUSPENSION RATES</b>	<b>1997-98</b>	<b>1998-99</b>	<b>1999-00</b>	<b>2000-01</b>	<b>2001-02</b>	<b>2002-03</b>	<b>2003-04</b>	<b>2004-05</b>
STUDENT DAYS Enrollment x 200 day school year	14,000	21,600	28,800	36,000	43,200	47,800	53,600	59,600
SEND-HOME SUSPENSION RATE % of student days missed due to send-home suspension	0.3%	0.2%	0.3%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.3%	0.2%
IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION RATE % of student days spent in non-class superv.	0.2%	0.2%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.1%	0.2%
% OF STUDENTS SENT HOME % of student body sent home 1+ times/year	30.6%	30.6%	26.4%	25%	22%	26%	34%	18%
% → IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION % of student body serving in school susps/year	23.6%	26.9%	32.6%	35%	30%	31%	17.9%	25.5%

- As another indicator of the quality of student behavior, North Star has only had one incident to report in the last five years of the Annual District Report of Violence and Vandalism. Raising expectations on smaller areas of student behavior has helped North Star avoid larger incidents that often accompany middle and high schools.

**THE NORTH STAR COMMUNITY IS HIGHLY SATISFIED WITH THEIR EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE.**

- STUDENT ATTENDANCE:** As one indicator of student satisfaction, student attendance was 97.7% for the year, above the goal of 95% for the eighth consecutive year. High school attendance is particularly impressive in comparison with the statewide average:

<b>ATTENDANCE RATE (Avg. Daily – Middle Sch.)</b>	<b>North Star Academy</b>	<b>Newark District</b>	<b>State of New Jersey</b>
2004-2005	97.0%	TBA	TBA
2003-2004	97.5%	91.8%	95.2%
2002-2003	96.8%	91.0%	95.1%
2001-2002	96.5%	91.3%	95.0%
2000-2001	96.5%	90.2%	94.9%
1999-2000	96.2%	90.1%	95.0%
1998-1999	95.5%	92.5%	94.9%
1997-1998	95.6%	93.1%	95.1%

<b>ATTENDANCE RATE (Avg. Daily – High School)</b>	<b>North Star Academy</b>	<b>Newark District</b>	<b>State of New Jersey</b>
2004-2005	98.6%	TBA	TBA
2003-2004	97.0%	85.2%	93.1%
2002-2003	96.4%	85.7%	93.0%
2001-2002	96.5%	87.3%	92.9%
2000-2001	96.5%	84.0%	92.7%



- **STUDENT ATTITUDES:** Wanting to be responsive to particular concerns and issues, the school surveyed students for the eighth consecutive year. In the year-end survey, students once again overwhelmingly indicated that they thought North Star was better than their previous schools. The students also identified the teachers' actions and attitudes as to what they like the most about the school—exactly the responses the school would hope for. The anonymous survey (an instrument used by the Hudson Institute to analyze charter schools) was given to students in the last week of school; 212 students filled out the survey:

WHAT DO YOU LIKE ABOUT THIS SCHOOL (Check all that apply)		N=212
Good teachers		70%
They teach it until I learn it		56%
They don't let me fall behind		49%
Nice people running the school		39%
A lot is expected of me		38%
Safety		37%
Attention that teachers pay to me		36%
Computers and other technology		34%
Class size		31%
Other out-of-school activities		29%
Curriculum		29%
School size		25%
Sports program		24%
Opportunities for my parents to participate		21%
Food		12%

Student responses to what they disliked about the school were also in alignment with the school's vision—they felt school was too strict and too much homework. The school will work on considering more appetizing food options:

WHAT DO YOU DISLIKE ABOUT THIS SCHOOL (Check all that apply)		N=212
Too much homework		53%
Too strict		43%
I don't like the food		43%
Not enough other activities		36%
Poor sports program		30%
Too tough, academically		21%
Boring		16%
The school is too small		15%
My classes are too small		11%
Not enough computers and other technology		9%
Too hard to get here from where I live		9%
I could be learning more		7%
Not enough homework		5%
Bad teachers		4%
Not strict enough		4%
Not safe enough		4%

- **GRADUATE ATTITUDES IN EXIT INTERVIEWS:** The high school principal facilitated exit interviews of approximately an hour with all of the graduating 12<sup>th</sup> graders. The students were remarkably similar in their evaluation of the school. In general, the seniors thought that North Star's strengths were the school culture and strong discipline, teaching them to take responsibility for their actions and not lose focus. Most of the students had no suggestions for improvement, although a few mentioned wanting more leadership opportunities and a more extended sports program. As a final question, students were asked, "If you know what you know now and had to do it all over again, would you [attend North Star]?" 19 of 20 students answered definitively without a doubt.
- **PARENTS ARE SATISFIED:** The strongest measure of parent satisfaction is the 3.4% average annual transfer rate over seven years. A second indicator is that ten spots in the incoming class of 5<sup>th</sup> graders for the fall of 2005 had to be reserved for siblings of current North Star students. A third indicator is that the single most important factor that caused incoming parents to choose North Star was the recommendation of a current North Star parent. Still, the school – wanting to be responsive to particular concerns and issues – surveyed parents for the eighth consecutive year. In the year-end survey, parents once again overwhelmingly indicated that they thought North Star was better than the previous schools where they sent their children and they were very satisfied with North Star. The anonymous survey (an instrument used by the Hudson Institute to analyze charter schools) was given to parents (or guardians) at the July report card night; 117 parents filled out the survey. Because of the high percentage of North Star's 298 students who are siblings, this parent response represents a majority of the families attending the school:

HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH SPECIFIC FEATURES OF THE SCHOOL? (N=117)	VERY SATISFIED	SOMEWHAT SATISFIED	UNCERTAIN	NOT TOO SATISFIED	QUITE DISSATISFIED	DOES NOT APPLY (or NO ANSWER)
Curriculum (What the school teaches)	93%	7%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Academic standards for students	90%	10%	0%	0%	0%	0%
School size	87%	10%	2%	0%	1%	0%
Outdoor education trips	87%	12%	1%	0%	1%	0%
Class size	86%	14%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Quality of teaching	86%	13%	1%	0%	0%	0%
How much school expects of parents	84%	14%	1%	1%	0%	0%
Opportunities for parents to participate	84%	13%	3%	0%	1%	0%
People running the school	83%	13%	2%	1%	0%	1%
Other school field trips	82%	15%	2%	0%	1%	0%
Individual attention by teachers	82%	15%	2%	1%	0%	0%
Accessibility and openness	79%	14%	5%	0%	2%	0%
Computers and technology	77%	20%	3%	0%	0%	0%
School building facilities	76%	22%	1%	0%	1%	0%

Other extra-curricular activities	62%	21%	10%	4%	2%	2%
Outdoor play space (field)	55%	32%	7%	3%	3%	0%
Food	44%	26%	14%	10%	4%	3%
Sports program	40%	21%	14%	15%	6%	4%

PLEASE COMPARE THIS CHARTER SCHOOL WITH THE SCHOOL YOUR CHILD WOULD OTHERWISE BE ATTENDING: (N=117)	BETTER	SAME	WORSE
Academic standards for students	88%	7%	5%
Quality of teaching	85%	10%	5%
Extra help for students when needed	85%	9%	6%
Curriculum (what the school teaches)	84%	13%	4%
Your child's attitude about school	83%	10%	7%
Basic skills	82%	14%	5%
Discipline	81%	14%	5%
School size	81%	14%	5%
Individual attention by teachers	80%	15%	5%
Safety	80%	14%	5%
School facilities	78%	19%	4%
Accessibility and openness	77%	18%	5%
Class size	77%	19%	5%
Parent involvement	74%	21%	5%

- PARENTS WANT SMALL CLASSES AND HIGH STANDARDS. North Star surveyed parents who entered the lottery for incoming 5<sup>th</sup> grade students as to the reason why they chose this school. For the third year in a row, the top two reasons cited – both by more than 80% of those surveyed – were small class size and higher standards.

IMPORTANT REASONS FOR CHOOSING THIS SCHOOL FOR YOUR CHILD (Check all that apply)	N=82
High standards at charter school	93%
Small size of charter school classes	84%
Better teachers at charter school	70%
North Star's program is closer to my educational philosophy	70%
Greater opportunities for parent involvement at charter school	56%
People told me this is a better school	55%
My child wants to come here	51%
Charter school offers before/after-school programs	41%
I am unhappy with curriculum or teaching at current school	37%
I'd prefer private school but I cannot afford it	32%
Current school is unsafe; charter school is safer	27%
Location of charter school more convenient	21%
My child has special needs that current school is not meeting	18%
<b>Other:</b> (Please explain on other side)	9%

- **STRONG FACULTY ATTENDANCE.** Research suggests that high faculty attendance is the hallmark of a good school. At North Star, faculty attendance during the 2004-2005 school year was an excellent 98.4%, prospectively above the New Jersey benchmark for the seventh year consecutively. This number is even more impressive when one considers that the staff has continued to grow with the school's expansion. When faculty members were out sick, other teachers within the building rotated to cover their classes. The following table shows the faculty attendance over eight years:

FACULTY ATTENDANCE (Avg. Daily Rate)		North Star Academy	State of New Jersey
	2004-2005	98.4%	TBA
	2003-2004	97.8%	96.2%
	2002-2003	98.8%	95.3%
	2001-2002	97.4%	96.4%
	2000-2001	98.1%	96.3%
	1999-2000	98.5%	94.7%
	1998-1999	98.2%	96.1%
	1997-1998	99.1%	96.7%

**NORTH STAR HAS MAINTAINED HIGH STANDARDS OF FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR EIGHT CONSECUTIVE YEARS.**

- As mentioned in the Governance & Management section, the school has maintained a clean audit and budget surplus for eight consecutive years.

## PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

*"North Star gets the parents involved in your child's education. You cannot just drop them off and leave it up to the school to teach them. The parents have a responsibility to play a part in their child's education."*

-- ANONYMOUS PARENT SURVEY RESPONSE, JULY 2003

### **OUTREACH PROCEDURES:**

- **PARENT ORGANIZERS:** North Star Parent Council's President and Vice President regularly reach out to the parent community to elicit their support. A volunteer at the school also provides parent organizing support.
- **WEEKLY INFORMATION FOLDERS:** Every week, parents receive a green folder with all announcements, permission slips, a monthly calendar, and a weekly North Star Paycheck that shows how well their child(ren) did behaviorally. These folders are signed and sent back to school as evidence that the parent has received and read the information. Over 95% of the parents report reading the information in their folders on a regular basis.
- **PARENTS SIGN COVENANT.** Heading into the ninth year, all parents of North Star students voluntarily signed the Parent/School Covenant, pledging their support for and involvement in the educational program for their children. The Parent/School covenant was updated in 2003-04.

### **ORGANIZATIONS, ACTIVITIES AND ATTENDANCE: PARENTS CONTINUED TO BE PARTNERS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION AND GOVERNANCE OF THE SCHOOL.**

- **PARENTS VOLUNTEER.** Parents followed through on their pledge by getting involved in the school. Parents reviewed student work as part of year-end jury panels, served breakfast and lunch, coached soccer and basketball teams, shared their stories in community circle, chaperoned school field trips, and raised funds to support Parent Council activities. The major parent-driven enterprise of the year centered around organizing the school's 8<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade graduation activities in June/July.
- **PARENTS GOVERN THE SCHOOL.** Two parents – the president and vice-president of the Parent Council, as elected by their peers – serve on the seven-member board of trustees which governs the school. In year seven, Toni King was re-elected president of the Parent Council. She is a dedicated volunteer and has coordinated the school's child nutrition program for several years. Micheal Lytle, who also coached the middle school basketball team, was elected to a fourth term as the vice-president.

- **PARENTS SERVE ON AD-HOC AND STANDING BOARD OF TRUSTEES COMMITTEES.** Parents are actively involved in giving feedback about the school's progress. When certain areas of interest come forward (e.g., creation of SPED Self-Assessment Review), parents are called to participate in focus groups and give detailed suggestions for improvement.
- **PARENTS PICK UP REPORT CARDS AT SCHOOL.** All North Star parents picked up their children's report cards at the end of each trimester during the school year. At that time, all faculty members were available to discuss with parents their children's progress. Parents also attended teacher-scheduled conferences during trimester mid-points, for updates on their children's work (see Assessment Section for attendance at these events).
- **PARENTS ATTEND PARENT COUNCIL MEETINGS.** The Parent Council, which is the organizational body representing all families with children enrolled at North Star, met three times during the year. In addition, the Parent Council elected four officers who met an additional six times during the year. The committees also met to plan the 8<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade graduations several times during the year.
- **PARENTS ATTENDED SCHOOLWIDE CELEBRATIONS.** Schoolwide events for parents (in addition to the Parent Council meetings) included:
  - ✓ High School Graduation (6/16/05)—100% attendance of 12<sup>th</sup> graders
  - ✓ Moving Up Ceremony (7/14/05)—100% attendance of 8<sup>th</sup> graders
  - ✓ Awards Night and Re-registration Meeting (6/9/05)—97% attendance
  - ✓ Black History Month Celebration and Supper (2/24/05)—90% attendance
  - ✓ Christmas Fundraiser (December '04)—40% participation
  - ✓ Latino Cultural Heritage Celebration/ Pot Luck Dinner (11/18/04)—160 families (70% attendance)

#### **PARENT SATISFACTION:**

- Enclosed in the section "Non-Academic Goals and Objectives: Summary of Assessment Results" are the results of the parent surveys. As can be seen there, North Star parents are overwhelmingly positive about their experience at the school.

#### **TRAINING/SUPPORT:**

- **PARENTS ATTENDED WORKSHOPS TO SUPPORT THEIR WORK AS A PARENT.** Schoolwide events for parents (in addition to the Parent Council meetings) included:
  - ✓ Bring Back the Kitchen Table Regional Parental Involvement Workshop (6/11/05)—Parent Council Attended

- ✓ Workshop: Financial Planning for College (5/10/05)—30 families
- ✓ High School Enrollment Meeting (1/27/05)—90% attendance
- ✓ Workshop: Financial Planning for College (1/22/05)—40 families
- ✓ Back-to-School Night/Parent Council Meeting (9/29/04)—80% attendance
- ✓ 5<sup>th</sup> grade Parent-Child Workshop (8/27/04)—90% attendance

## COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

### **OUTREACH PROCEDURES**

The entire North Star community works to increase the awareness of the larger surrounding community and elevate involvement in the school's mission. School directors, Parent Council representatives, North Star's non-profit affiliate Uncommon Schools, and its Board of Trustees reach out to the community at-large to engage governmental agencies, non-profit, social service organizations and the corporate world through school activities and programs.



### **SCHOOL/COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES: NORTH STAR UTILIZED DOWNTOWN NEWARK AS AN EXTENDED CAMPUS.**

- **NEWARK MUSEUM:** Almost every grade level viewed exhibits at the neighboring Newark Museum. Highlights included an five-week ornithology program for 5<sup>th</sup> graders, African Art exhibit and the Trips to Dynamic Earth exhibit.
- **NEW JERSEY PERFORMING ARTS CENTER:** For the sixth consecutive year, North Star students attended a minimum of five different performances during the year. This year, students witnessed a record ten performances on the following dates: 10/14/04, 10/21/04, 1/12/05, 1/13/05, 1/14/05, 2/11/05, 3/9/05, 4/14/05, 5/6/05 & 5/18/05.
- **YM/WCA OF NEWARK:** During the winter months, North Star middle school students took their physical education classes at the Y across the street – swimming in the pool and using the gym for a variety of sports.
- **NEWARK PUBLIC LIBRARY:** North Star students used the library (located across the park from the school) as the school library, doing research for their classwork, as well as viewing exhibits and productions.
- **SACRED HEART CATHEDRAL:** Some students studied and viewed Gothic architecture while visiting this National Landmark based in Newark.
- **SPORTING EVENTS:** North Star students attended teacher-led excursions to see New Jersey Nets games with donated tickets, and 30 members of the North Star community attended Newark Bears baseball games together in June and July.



**NORTH STAR DEVELOPED MEANINGFUL PARTNERSHIP AND COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH A WIDE RANGE OF INSTITUTIONS.**

- **LEHMAN BROTHERS:** In a new partnership in 2004-05, Lehman Brothers has sponsored a Book Scholarship for North Star alumni, two Last-Dollar scholarships for seniors, and four summer internships at Lehman Brothers' offices in Manhattan. Lehman Brothers is also collaborating with school directors to launch a major capital campaign in the near future.
- **RUTGERS UNIVERSITY:** Rutgers University faculty and administrators were active partners in the federal GEAR-UP grant (see College Guidance section), and students from Rutgers did their teaching practicum at North Star Academy, learning from watching the school's faculty in action and helping with classroom tasks.



**DELOITTE CONSULTING:** Deloitte has sponsored four Impact Days, where North Star students were consultants for a day at Deloitte's regional offices in Summit, NJ. They also have launched a 2-year long mentoring program for 20 North Star students of the Class of 2006, tracking them through the last two years of their high school career.

- **NEW COMMUNITY CORPORATION:** NCC, Newark's largest community organization, purchased and renovated the building that houses the school; prepares lunch for the students at its extended care facility; and communicates school progress through its newspaper, the *Clarion*.
- **KIRKPATRICK & LOCKHART:** North Star began another new partnership in 2004-05 with this Newark-based major law firm. The law firm will be sponsoring an online SAT preparation course starting in the Fall of 2005 and will provide mentoring and internship experiences for high school students at North Star.
- **ST. PHILIP'S ACADEMY:** North Star continued to work collaboratively with its K-8 school neighbor, St. Philip's Academy. St. Philip's physical education classes used North Star's playing field on a daily basis. St. Philip's also used the playing field to run an extensive outdoor summer program.
- **COLLEGES:** As mentioned previously in "Innovative Program" section, North Star has built many partnerships with universities in support of its graduates.

Over 40 colleges and universities have developed relationships with the school's College Placement Office. Some of the strongest partnerships invite North Star students to their campus and provide simulated college learning environments for them. This past year, Boston College and Syracuse have distinguished themselves for the extra efforts they have made to support the college placement work of North Star.

#### **ACCOUNTABILITY AND PLAN**

One of the school directors coordinates all community involvement activities while working closely with the other leaders to ensure proper alignment of mission and services. Many of the plans for the future have been included in the activities listed above.

## PUBLIC RELATIONS & OUTREACH ACTIVITIES & OUTCOMES

*"My visit to North Star Academy yesterday was truly inspiring, and I wanted to thank you for being such a wonderful host. I am still digesting all that I learned during my visit—it's a teacher's dream to be welcomed into such an innovative environment."*

-- KAREN WEINER, NYC PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHER, JANUARY 2005

**NORTH STAR ECLIPSED ALL PREVIOUS YEARS WITH OVER 500 VISITORS IN 2004-05, TOTALING OVER 2,500 VISITORS SINCE THE SCHOOL'S OPENING. THROUGH THESE TOURS, NORTH STAR CONTINUES TO SHARE ITS INNOVATIVE PROGRAM WITH EDUCATORS AND OTHER CITIZENS.**

In addition to its extensive advertising, outreach and open houses for the purposes of introducing prospective applicant families to the school (see Student Recruiting section), North Star spent considerable time reaching out to and welcoming the public. North Star eclipsed the mark of 2,500 visitors over eight years, representing sectors of the local, national, and international community. In 2004-05, over 500 visitors came to North Star, an average of 2½ visitors per school day. Visitors came from as far away as New Zealand to study the impact of North Star Academy and charter schools in general. 130 school founders/directors visited the school, including leaders of the premier charter schools from across the country. Teachers and administrators from 50 additional schools and over 70 businesses/foundations also visited the school. In particular, representatives of more than three-fourths of New Jersey's charter schools have visited North Star Academy. Groups came to see the school this past year from the following institutions:

### **DISTINGUISHED VISITORS:**

- ✓ Senator Frank R. Lautenberg (D-NJ)
- ✓ Marion Bolden, Superintendent, Newark Public Schools
- ✓ Gary Roth, Associate Provost, Rutgers University

### **SCHOOL FOUNDERS/DIRECTORS WHO VISITED:**

- ✓ Dr. Stephanie Branch, Superintendent, LEAP Academy (NJ)
- ✓ Dennis Pyatt, Principal, Pupanai HS (New Zealand)
- ✓ Deb Hoeft, Principal, The Potters School (Great Rapids, MI)
- ✓ Tammi Sutton, Co-Director, Gaston College Prep Charter School (Gaston, NC)
- ✓ Bryan Patten, CFO, Cesar Chavez Public Policy Charter Schools
- ✓ Melanie Byron, Director, Community Partnership Charter School
- ✓ Dorreen Land, Superintendent, and Terri Gray, Principal, Harlem Children's Zone Promise Academy
- ✓ John Zitzner, Founder & President, E-City Charter School

- ✓ Robert A. Lundin, Founding School Director, Yes College Prep School, 2<sup>nd</sup> Campus
- ✓ Julie Trott, Founding Principal, Williamsburg Collegiate Charter School (Brooklyn, NY)
- ✓ Marilyn Calo, Director, Family Life Academy Charter School
- ✓ Donald DePasquale, Director, Hoboken Charter School (Hoboken, NJ)
- ✓ 15 School Founders, Building Excellent Schools Network (Boston, MA)
- ✓ 20 School Leaders, New Leaders for New Schools (National)

#### **OTHER SCHOOLS/EDUCATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS:**

- ✓ West Side HS (NJ)
- ✓ MIT Robotics Mentors (MA)
- ✓ Montclair State University (NJ)
- ✓ KIPP Fellows
- ✓ Trenton Community Charter School (Trenton, NJ)
- ✓ Freedom School (MI)
- ✓ Hope Academy (MI)
- ✓ Peddie School (NJ)
- ✓ Dual Language Middle School (NY)
- ✓ United Federation of Teachers (UFT)
- ✓ Columbia University (NY)
- ✓ School Performance (NY)
- ✓ New York Center for Charter School Excellence
- ✓ Oakland Unified School District New Schools Development Group (CA)
- ✓ East Oakland Youth Development Center (CA)
- ✓ Leadership Prep Charter School (NY)
- ✓ Explore Charter School (Brooklyn, NY)
- ✓ Community Partnership Charter School (Brooklyn, NY)
- ✓ Advocates for International Education
- ✓ Association for Christian Schools (National)
- ✓ Downtown Charter School (New York, NY)
- ✓ Bank Street College (NY)
- ✓ Marion P. Thomas Charter School (Newark, NJ)
- ✓ Princeton Charter School (NJ)
- ✓ Charter School Resource Center (NJ)
- ✓ Gateway Charter HS (CA)
- ✓ Seed Charter School (Washington, DC)
- ✓ College Leadership New Jersey
- ✓ Wesleyan University (CT)
- ✓ Village Academies (NY)
- ✓ Harvard University (MA)
- ✓ Dickinson College (Pennsylvania)
- ✓ University of Vermont (Vermont)
- ✓ Boston College (Massachusetts)
- ✓ Swarthmore College (Pennsylvania)

- ✓ NJIT (New Jersey)
- ✓ Stockton State College (New Jersey)
- ✓ Williams College (Massachusetts)
- ✓ Syracuse University (New York)
- ✓ Colby College (Maine)
- ✓ Monmouth University (New Jersey)
- ✓ Smith College (Massachusetts)
- ✓ Northeastern University (Massachusetts)
- ✓ Ramapo College (New Jersey)
- ✓ University of Richmond (Virginia)
- ✓ Spelman University (Georgia)
- ✓ George Washington University (Washington, DC)
- ✓ Kean University (New Jersey)
- ✓ Seton Hall University (New Jersey)
- ✓ Yale University (Connecticut)
- ✓ Howard University (Washington, DC)

**BUSINESSES/NON-PROFIT AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS:**

- ✓ Beginning with Children Foundation
- ✓ Prudential Insurance
- ✓ Deloitte Consulting
- ✓ Walton Foundation
- ✓ AFS
- ✓ Dodge Foundation
- ✓ Pearson Educational
- ✓ PNC Bank
- ✓ Israel Public Education
- ✓ Star Ledger
- ✓ Lehman Brothers
- ✓ The Chad Schools
- ✓ Ford Foundation
- ✓ NJ Community Foundation
- ✓ Regent Atlantic
- ✓ Williamsport, VA Municipal Government
- ✓ Chubb Insurance
- ✓ Couch Insurance
- ✓ Over 50 additional businesses represented in Black Professionals Day and Reaching our Young Men Conference



- **COLLEGES ADMISSIONS OFFICERS VISITING NORTH STAR:** 27 admissions officers came to North Star to talk about their schools and recruit North Star students:

- ✓ Cornell University (9/20)
- ✓ Drew University (9/21)
- ✓ Rowan University (9/22)
- ✓ Berkeley College (9/23)
- ✓ Brown University (9/23)
- ✓ Rutgers University (9/24)
- ✓ Barnard College (9/28)
- ✓ The College of New Jersey
- ✓ Dickinson College (10/8)
- ✓ University of Vermont (10/12)
- ✓ Boston College (10/12)
- ✓ Swarthmore College (10/13)
- ✓ NJIT (10/14)
- ✓ Stockton State College (10/14)
- ✓ Williams College (10/15)
- ✓ Syracuse University (10/18)
- ✓ Colby College (10/22)
- ✓ Monmouth University (10/22)
- ✓ Smith College (10/25)
- ✓ Northeastern University (10/26)
- ✓ Ramapo College (10/26)
- ✓ University of Richmond (11/9)
- ✓ Spelman University (11/10)
- ✓ Kean University (11/15)
- ✓ Seton Hall University (11/16)
- ✓ Yale University (11/22)
- ✓ Howard University (12/1)



#### **NORTH STAR CONTRIBUTED TO THE PUBLIC DIALOGUE ON SCHOOL REFORM.**

North Star's leaders continued to impact the public and school leaders about important issues in urban education reform. Co-Founder Norman Atkins was involved in starting Excellence Charter School of Bedford Stuyvesant, an all-male elementary school which opened in the Fall of 2004, and he is currently collaborating with other school leaders to open more charter schools in New York. Co-Director Paul Bambrick-Santoyo served as a faculty member for New Leaders for New Schools, a leading national urban principal training program. He is actively involved in collaborating to define the vision and strategic plan for successful growth of the organization. Bambrick-Santoyo formed part of the Task Force on Quality as part of the national Charter School Leadership Council, and he also presented multiple workshops across the country to over 150 school leaders around the topic of "Data-Driven Instruction & Assessment." He, James Verrilli and Julie Jackson also

shared North Star's experience with the charter fellows from the Building Excellent Schools Network and Replications, Inc. In addition, three different school leaders did residency experiences at North Star in 2004-05 to prepare for launching their own schools.

#### **NORTH STAR CONTINUES TO BE HIGHLY VISIBLE, SHARING ITS PROGRAM AND PROGRESS THROUGH THE PRINT AND BROADCAST MEDIA.**

In its eight years, North Star has continued to receive regular media attention. In 2004-05, North Star Academy was featured on the front page of the New Jersey section of the *Star Ledger* and in an exclusive spot on Fox News in Cleveland, Ohio. The media also filmed North Star during Charter School Appreciation Week and for the send-off of the 12-student team that spent two weeks in New Zealand. Over the past eight years, the school has also appeared in articles in the *New York Times*, *Time* Magazine, the *Sunday Mainichi*, (a weekly periodical in Japan comparable in influence to *Time* Magazine), *Philanthropy* magazine, *Children's Beat*, and *Jumpstarting the Charter School Movement* (fundraising guide).

#### **NORTH STAR ACADEMY CONTRIBUTED TO LEGISLATIVE DEBATE CONCERNING EDUCATION IN NEW JERSEY.**

North Star participated as an exemplary school in New Jersey Commissioner of Education's Small Schools Network. North Star also continued to support the New Jersey Charter Public Schools Association, serving on its board. The Association co-sponsored a fifth successful New Jersey Charter School Job Fair, facilitated meetings of charter school leaders, and provided an active, consistent voice at hearings before various legislative committees.

#### **ACCOUNTABILITY AND PLANS**

One of the school directors coordinates all public relations activities while working closely with the other leaders to ensure proper alignment of mission and services. Given the extensive and thorough work in this area, the school leadership is quite satisfied in maintaining the level of activities of the current year.

## STUDENT AND STAFF RECRUITMENT EFFORTS

### *STUDENT ADMISSIONS*

**RECRUITMENT POLICY: NORTH STAR ACTIVELY REACHED OUT TO A WIDE SPECTRUM OF NEWARK STUDENTS AND FAMILIES AND CONDUCTED AN EGALITARIAN ADMISSION PROCESS, SELECTING STUDENTS AT RANDOM, WITH NO REGARD TO PAST ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE.**

- North Star has recruited students at 29 different Newark public schools over the past eight years, with seven schools visited in 2004-05. These visits targeted some areas which had not previously sent students to North Star as well as schools which supplied students in the past. Letters and brochures were sent to all Newark elementary school principals. Visits to most schools included speaking directly to 4<sup>th</sup> grade students about North Star – the school’s directors spoke to more than 200 4<sup>th</sup> graders and dozens of parents. They described the program in detail, answered questions and distributed brochures for students to take home and discuss with parents. A Spanish translator accompanied the recruiters to schools with a high bilingual/Spanish-speaking population.
- Letters were sent to all current North Star families advising them that if they had another eligible student in the household, the family and student would be asked to participate in the application process like all other students.
- 1,200 brochures about North Star were distributed. Copies of public service announcements were sent to cable TV and radio stations.
- In 2005, North Star held four Open Houses for prospective applicant families and siblings (1/29—high school; 2/3—siblings; 2/8 and 3/3—middle school). More than 150 families attended the Open Houses, which featured a two-hour presentation outlining the school program as well as tours of the school by current North Star students. Current North Star parents provided hospitality and shared in the presentation.
- Two Simulated School Days were held (3/4 and 3/11). Students and their parents were able to attend three academic classes as well as an opening and closing assembly. At the close of the Simulated School Days, a simple, one page application was distributed. More than 80 students attended the Simulated School Days.
- A random lottery was held on the evening of March 23. Eleven applicants were certified as siblings of current North Star students and were numbered 1-11. The remaining names were drawn from the lottery, one by one, by a Certified Public Accountant. The lottery was held in public at the school, with approximately 150 people in attendance. All applicants were notified of their lottery number the next day.



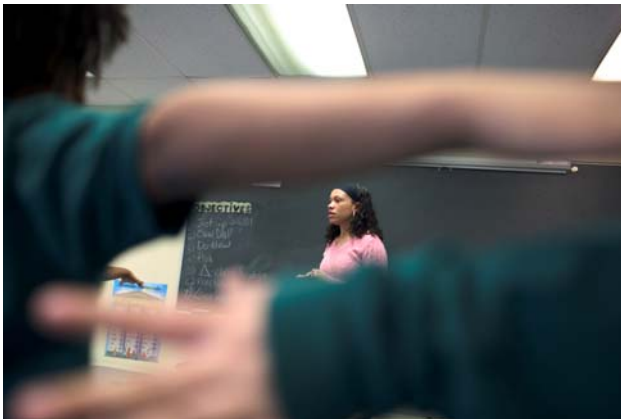
### STUDENT ADMISSION RESULTS:

- North Star has enrolled 375 students, fifth to twelfth grade, for the fall of 2005. There have been just over 2,100 student applications to North Star. At this writing, there are just over 1,600 names on the waiting list. In other words, for every student enrolled at North Star, there are 4.3 waiting to get in.
- In terms of socio-economic and ethnic factors, North Star students were very representative of their district (see previous sections for more details).

### STUDENT WITHDRAWALS AND EXIT INTERVIEWS:

- In the section on Non-Academic Goals & Results, North Star highlights the information about student withdrawals as well as the conclusions from the student exit interviews.

### TEACHER RECRUITING



*"The teachers offer their time after school. They go above and beyond the call of duty."*

--ANONYMOUS PARENT SURVEY  
RESPONSE, JULY 2005

*"North Star is an excellent school with dedicated teachers and staff willing to go that extra mile."*

--ANONYMOUS PARENT SURVEY  
RESPONSE, JULY 2005

### TIMELINE, ACTIVITIES AND PROCEDURES: NORTH STAR HAS CREATED AN EXTENSIVE STAFF RECRUITMENT MODEL TO ATTRACT AND HIRE THE MOST HIGHLY QUALIFIED TEACHERS.

- **RECRUITMENT ACTIVITIES:** NORTH STAR CONDUCTED A WIDE-RANGING SEARCH FOR TOP TEACHERS. North Star has selected its faculty from more than 4,500 resumes and applications submitted over eight years. North Star posted openings at graduate schools of education; advertised in *the New York Times*, *the Star-Ledger*, and *Teacher Magazine*; participated in nine regional job fairs (Teachers College, Princeton University, Rutgers University, New York University, Minority Recruitment Network, Northeast Regional Charter School Job Fair, New Jersey Charter Public Schools Association, Teach for America Regional Job Fair, NJDOE World Languages Conference); listed openings on three online recruitment networks; and

utilized a teacher recruiter via the nonprofit organization Uncommon Schools.

- **HIRING PROCESS:** NORTH STAR LED POTENTIAL CANDIDATES THROUGH AN EXTENSIVE SCREENING PROCESS THAT INCLUDED TEACHING A LESSON. One of the Co-Directors personally screened all resumes (close to 1,000 in total), and potential candidates were interviewed over the phone by a school leader (more than 100 candidates were called). Candidates who still met North Star's profile were interviewed a second time, and Co-Directors along with lead teachers watched prospective faculty members lead lessons in their own classrooms or at North Star (over 50 teachers were observed). Co-Directors gave explicit, constructive feedback after observing the lesson and evaluated teachers' ability to self-evaluate their performance. In selected cases, certain teachers were asked to be observed for a second time to see if they could implement some of the changes recommended by the leadership team. The Board of Trustees reviewed every potential hire at their board meetings, and references were checked in the final stages prior to making an offer.

## **RECRUITMENT RESULTS**

- **NORTH STAR HEADS INTO ITS 9<sup>TH</sup> YEAR WITH A DIVERSE STAFF OF 43 TEACHERS.**
  - ✓ On average, they are starting their 6<sup>th</sup> year of teaching—four are rookies, four are entering their second year of teaching; seven are entering their third; and 28 have taught for three years or more.
  - ✓ The faculty of 43 collectively holds 23 master's degrees and one doctoral degree.
  - ✓ 49% are teachers of color (17 Black, 3 Latino, 1 Asian); 51% are White (22).
  - ✓ 37% are male (16); 63% are female (27).
  - ✓ Eight are alumni of Teach for America.
  - ✓ Thirty have previously taught in traditional public school districts prior to North Star. The New Jersey districts were: Newark (7), Paterson (2), Plainfield, East Orange, Rumson, Englewood and Manahawkin. Out-of-state districts were: New York City (8), Washington, D.C. (2), Philadelphia, Chicago, Baltimore, Cambridge (MA), Oakland, Yonkers, Richmond (VA), Lake Worth (FL), Grand Rapids (MI), and Devens (MA).
  - ✓ Sixty-nine percent (22 of 32) faculty members are returning for year nine.
- **FACULTY WORKED LONGER DAYS AND YEARS.** In classroom time, North Star teachers worked an hour longer each day and a month longer during the year than average public school teachers. The typical teacher school day was nine hours. In addition, all faculty members organized and led at least one extra-curricular activity.

## **EXIT INTERVIEW PROCEDURES AND DATA**

- **RETURNING AND DEPARTING FACULTY COMPLETE A YEAR-END FACULTY QUESTIONNAIRE.** All faculty were encouraged to fill out an year-end questionnaire to give feedback to the school:

### North Star Academy 2004-2005 End of Year Questionnaire

**Purpose:** *The purpose of this questionnaire is to create the best possible environment for our faculty, staff and students in the years to come. All suggestions will be read thoroughly and will be used to set North Star on a road to success. If you would prefer, this questionnaire may remain anonymous.*

**Please check one in each column:**

<input type="checkbox"/> Returning faculty member	<input type="checkbox"/> 1-2 years at North Star	<input type="checkbox"/> High school
<input type="checkbox"/> Departing faculty member	<input type="checkbox"/> 3+ years at North Star	<input type="checkbox"/> Middle school

**Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements:**

- |  |                   |                   |                |                |
|--|-------------------|-------------------|----------------|----------------|
| 1. I understand and believe in the mission of North Star.  | Strongly Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Strongly Agree |
| 2. North Star is a professional and supportive work environment.   | Strongly Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Strongly Agree |
| 3. I have access to the resources I need to be effective in my job.  | Strongly Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Strongly Agree |
| 4. I receive the support I need from administration to be effective in my job.                                 | Strongly Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Strongly Agree |
| 5. There is a collegial atmosphere among the faculty at North Star.  | Strongly Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Strongly Agree |
| 6. There are open lines of communication between administration and faculty.                                   | Strongly Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Strongly Agree |
| 7. Community Circle is effective in encouraging a positive school culture and supporting North Star's mission. | Strongly Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Strongly Agree |
| 8. (MS ONLY) Independent Reading is effective in creating a culture of reading.                                | Strongly Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Strongly Agree |
| 9. (HS ONLY) Advisory is effective in building positive school culture in support of mission.                  | Strongly Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Strongly Agree |

**Please rate the effectiveness of the following systems in making a positive impact on student achievement:**

- |   |               |                    |           |                |
|---|---------------|--------------------|-----------|----------------|
| 10. North Star Curriculum/Binders   | Not Effective | Somewhat Effective | Effective | Very Effective |
| 11. North Star Assessments  | Not Effective | Somewhat Effective | Effective | Very Effective |
| 12. North Star Pedagogy/Instructional Guidelines ("North Star Way")                 | Not Effective | Somewhat Effective | Effective | Very Effective |
| 13. Weekly Professional Development Meetings  | Not Effective | Somewhat Effective | Effective | Very Effective |
| 14. ½ day Professional Development Meetings   | Not Effective | Somewhat Effective | Effective | Very Effective |
| 15. Outside Professional Development Opportunities (school visits, workshops, etc.) | Not Effective | Somewhat Effective | Effective | Very Effective |

Comments/Suggestions:

**Please rate the effectiveness of the North Star's Code of Conduct and discipline systems (Paycheck, etc.) in the following areas:**

- |   |               |                    |           |                |
|---|---------------|--------------------|-----------|----------------|
| 16. Minimizing time spent by teachers on disciplinary matters         | Not Effective | Somewhat Effective | Effective | Very Effective |
| 17. Providing clear and immediate consequences for student misconduct | Not Effective | Somewhat Effective | Effective | Very Effective |
| 18. Maintaining a safe and structured environment                     |               |                    |           |                |

Not Effective	Somewhat Effective	Effective	Very Effective
19. What is the most successful aspect of North Star and why?			
20. What is the least successful aspect of NSA and why?			
21. What are the most important things that need to change at NSA? Why?			
22. In what ways do we positively affect our students? In what ways could we do better?			
23. Additional comments for the betterment of NSA. Athletics? Community service? Professional development? Role models?			
24. RETURNING FACULTY QUESTION: If you could dream of additional resources for you or your students, what would you like to have?			
25. What types of support from Mr. Verrilli/Ms. Jackson/Mr. Bambrick have you found most useful?			
26. What suggestions do you have for North Star to improve in these areas?			

- SCHOOL LEADERS REVIEW AND ANALYZE QUESTIONNAIRE DATA TO DRIVE DECISION-MAKING ABOUT FACULTY AND SCHOOL-WIDE INITIATIVES. As a result of the survey, school leaders have seen the great benefit of the Good to Great Council—a team of teachers devoted to improving the school. They will enhance the council’s role and form a separate council for the high school. Some of the initiatives that will come from the survey results include enhancing the faculty handbook and continuing to find new ways to affirm teaching excellence. Eleven faculty members departed from North Star in 2004-05: two moved closer to their original homes, two switched careers, one was tapped as a school leader for another charter school, and six teachers’ contracts were not renewed. This turnover is higher than in previous years. One of the main reasons for the higher turnover was the increased skills of the school leadership to identify deficiencies and in the teaching staff and the increased ability to provide them all the necessary resources to improve. Thus, when improvement did not occur, North Star was more easily able to conclude that the teacher was not the right match for the educational institution. The school is confident that these higher turnover results are a one-year anomaly that will return to North Star’s stellar retention rates in 2005-06.
- NORTH STAR’S SCHOOL LEADERSHIP TEAM GROWS AS SCHOOL EXPANDS. As a result of opening a second middle school facility, North Star has appointed a principal for the North Campus: Mike Mann, a current 7<sup>th</sup> grade team leader and History teacher. In addition, one high school staff member, Shana Pyatt, will begin a one-year intense training to be ready to accept a leadership role in the 2006-07. In this process, North Star has begun to develop a cutting-edge leadership development program, taking best practices from organizations such as New Leaders for New Schools, KIPP, and Building Excellent Schools Network and adding unique North Star elements to provide the most comprehensive leadership training available.

## CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

*“I visit and advise quite a few schools, but was deeply impressed with the energy of leadership and students at North Star.”*

--NOEL ANDERSON, PROFESSOR, BROOKLYN COLLEGE, DECEMBER 2004

### **NORTH STAR STUDENTS PARTICIPATED IN SELECTIVE, RIGOROUS ENRICHMENT PROGRAMS DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR.**

Students in all grades participated in a wide variety of enrichment activities. High school students engaged in civic, artistic, and entrepreneurial studies through regional workshops which brought them together with other top students, community leaders, expert artists, and politicians from Newark and New Jersey.

Over the past few years, students have been selected to participate in the following supplemental programs:

- The Wight Foundation
- Glassworks (Newark-based glassblowing studio)
- Science High Debate Team
- Newark’s Do Something’s Global Network Initiative
- FBI Summer Training Institute
- New Jersey Police Academy
- Printmaking Council of NJ Workshop
- Nandi School of Art (Montclair)

### **NORTH STAR OFFERED A WIDE VARIETY OF AFTER-SCHOOL ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES.**

In year eight, North Star increased its array of extra-curricular offerings and almost all students participated in at least one after-school activity during the year. In the middle school, North Star extended its day an additional 30 minutes in order to build a block called Encore, where academically prepared students had the opportunity to participate in a variety of clubs. Those students who needed extra academic help were placed in study halls during the same time period. The Encore activities took place from 2:30-4:00 pm and included the following:

#### **MIDDLE SCHOOL ENCORE ACTIVITIES/CLUBS:**

- Guitar
- African Dance
- Robotics
- Modern Dance
- Sexuality Education
- Health & Wellness
- Chess Club



- Ballet & Tap Dance
- Hip Hop
- Scrabble
- Community Service

Other activities occurred in the middle and high school after the end of the formal school day. The activities and their salient accomplishments are listed below:



#### MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL:

- Latino Cultural Celebration (November) & Black History Month Celebration (February)
- Flag Football Club — co-ed year-round league with four teams and forty participants
- Kids Rock Guitar Program — nation-wide program first launched at North Star; 12 students met weekly before school and performed at school events
- Boys/Girls Soccer—Brick City League, Intramural Soccer

#### HIGH SCHOOL:

- Student Government — creation of mission statement, Tag Day fundraiser, clothing drive, karaoke night, Valentine's Day soda grams, dues reward contests
- National Honors Society — 3<sup>rd</sup> cohort inducted in April
- Mock Trial Team
- Yearbook Club – produced second annual high school yearbook
- Junior Statesmen Program
- *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* – 2<sup>nd</sup> Spring Musical
- Community Service Club — volunteer work at St. John's soup kitchen, a fundraiser (*Positive Health, Inc.*), peer tutoring and school service projects
- North Star Step Team — multiple presentations around city
- Drama Club
- Weightlifting Club
- Yoga Club—nine students attended teacher-led sessions
- Morning SAT Preparation classes
- Hip Hop Festival Student Play
- Fundraising for non-profits: students donated earnings to a local retirement home, and other students also participated in a Breast Cancer Walk.

#### MIDDLE SCHOOL:

- Young Leaders Club (middle school student council)
- 7<sup>th</sup> grade Honors Club—read *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *Flowers for Algernon*, *Inherit the Wind*
- Campus Act – club introducing middle school students to theater and acting
- Fine Arts Club / GlassRoots Program — learning to blow glass and make beads
- Recycling Club

- Cheerleading squad
- Boys/Girls basketball
- Oratory Society

Other North Star students participated on local high schools' football, track and basketball teams.

## SCHOOL'S SELF-EVALUATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN (SEAP)

### **DESCRIPTION AND SUMMARY OF CHANGES**

From its inception, North Star has maintained a singular focus: preparing students to succeed in college and life beyond. In the current regulatory environment, the accountability of North Star to this mission is assured by its very nature as a charter school and by the law that created such schools. North Star gives maximum importance to the compilation and analysis of the results presented in the Academic and Non-Academic Results sections of this annual report. The framework with which those results are presented describes all the components of the school's Self-Evaluation and Accountability Plan. Although North Star has consistently closed the achievement gap and outperformed almost all comparable schools in every category, the Office of Innovative Programs and Schools did not feel that the SEAP was adequately covered in previous Annual Reports. Thus, in 2004-05, North Star resorted to an acceptable NJDOE format used by Robert Treat Academy (highlighted charter school in 2003-04) to present the same information that the school has reported for the past eight years. The best explanation for the enclosed SEAP chart is found by reviewing the actual results in earlier parts of the Annual Report.



**NORTH STAR ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL OF NEWARK  
SELF-EVALUATION & ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN**

Assessment Of	How Assessed	When Assessed	Administered to or Documented for	Desegregation /Cohorts	Analysis / Scores	Database or Record	Use and Reporting	Page/ Section Reference
-Reading -Language Arts -Math	-Terranova & NJ Custom  -GEPA  -HSPA  -Final Performance Taks	-Annually in the Spring  -Annually in the Spring  -Annually in the Spring  -Annual in June/July	-5 <sup>th</sup> -7 <sup>th</sup> grade and 9 <sup>th</sup> -10 <sup>th</sup> grade  -Grade 8  -Grade 11  -Grades 5-12	-General Ed students  -Special Ed students	-Individual scores  -Class and Grade NCE's, % Proficient by NJ standards, and % above national grade level  -Item Analyses  -Cohort and control group analysis	-Printed reports from scoring service  -Individual, class, and school data maintained	-Cohort analysis and control group achievement -Reviewed with staff and consultants for individual and curricular decisions - Annual Report to the Board of Trustees and Parents	See Academic Goals and Objectives Section of Report and Assessment Results
Science Social Studies Technology World Lang.	-Teacher tests -Software tests -Final Performance Tasks	-Daily -Weekly -Annually	-All students, all grades	-Individual -Class -Grade	-Individual, class and grade subject matter mastery	-Grade book -Interim Parent Report -Progress Report -Student Record	-Parent/ Guardian -Student Reporting	See Academic Goals and Objective Section of Report

**NORTH STAR ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL OF NEWARK  
SELF-EVALUATION & ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN**

<b>Assessment Of</b>	<b>How Assessed</b>	<b>When Assessed</b>	<b>Administered to or Documented for</b>	<b>Desegregation /Cohorts</b>	<b>Analysis / Scores</b>	<b>Database or Record</b>	<b>Use and Reporting</b>	<b>Page/ Section Reference</b>
Socialization Attendance	-North Star Paychecks -Attendance Register -Stability/ Mobility Rates -Suspension/ Expulsion rates -DOE Violence & Vandalism reporting sys. -School behavior reports	-Daily -Monthly -Annually	-All students, all grades	-All students	-Individual growth	-School database -Weekly Parent Report -Progress Report -Student Record -State Record	-Needs assessment -Student recognition -Parent awareness -State reports -Weekly parent reports	See Non-Academic Goals and Objectives Section of Report
Parent and Community Involvement	-Meeting logs -Conference logs -Surveys	-Periodically -Annually	-All Parents -All volunteers	-Individual -Class -Grade -School	-Analysis by activity by class, grade and school -Survey results vs. control group	-School Report Card -State reports -Annual reports on file	-School Report Card -State reports -Annual reports -Weekly information sent to parents	See Parent/ Community Involvement and Non-Academic Goals and Objectives Section of Report
Staff involvement Commitment	-Professional Development Hours -Professional evaluation -Retention rates -Survey	-Periodically -Periodically -Annually -Annually	All Staff	-Individual  -Total staff	-Involvement vs. Student Outcomes -Survey results	-State reports -Annual reports on file	-State reports -Annual report	See Staff Involvement Section and Non-Academic Goals and Objectives Section of Report

## SCHOOL LEADERSHIP BIOGRAPHIES



### **JAMES VERRILLI**

James Verrilli, Co-Founder & Co-Director of North Star Academy Charter School of Newark, has been teaching history to Newark students for 18 years. Prior to founding North Star, he taught at Link Community School in Newark's Central Ward, serving as the school's principal for three years. Under Verrilli's direction, Link grew – on a shoestring budget – into one of the state's more successful middle schools for low-income children. Verrilli is an unorthodox, risk-taking teacher, who designed his own multi-media software to teach the Civil Rights movement and comes to class regularly in the guise of important historical characters. He studied under Ted Sizer at Brown University, where he earned a Master of the Arts in Teaching, and received his B.A. in History from Colby College. He began his career as a member of the Jesuit Volunteer Corps.

### **JULIE JACKSON**

Julie Jackson, Principal of North Star Academy College Preparatory High School, has taught mathematics to urban NJ students for 10 years. Jackson moved quickly from full-time teacher to a leadership role at North Star, serving for two years as Dean of Students and then leading the development of the high school program as its principal. In 2002, she was the recipient of a Dodge Leadership Award for principals who have shown strong leadership and initiative. Before coming to North Star, she taught Language Arts and Math at Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary School in Paterson for four years, where she co-chaired the school improvement team, coached a competitive girls basketball team, and was honored in 1998 as Teacher of the Year. She earned an M.Ed. in Educational Administration from William Paterson University (2002), a B.A. in Communications from Shippensburg University (1992) and did graduate work in African-American Studies at the University of Wisconsin. She began her career as corps member at Teach for America, where she also served as a professional development advisor.



### **PAUL BAMBRICK-SANTOYO**

Paul Bambrick-Santoyo, Co-Director of North Star, has been teaching for nine years. Entering his fourth year at North Star, Bambrick-Santoyo has spearheaded the school's data-driven instruction and interim assessment process, facilitating over 60 quarterly assessments for the school and contributing to North Star's quickly achieving "90/90/90" status (90% free/reduced lunch, 90% students of color, 90% proficient on state assessments). He is a graduate of New Leaders for New Schools, a national organization training the next generation of urban school leaders. A frequent presenter on data-driven instruction, he currently serves as a faculty member for New Leaders for New Schools, is a Trustee of the Board of the New Jersey Charter Public Schools Association, and participates in the national Charter School Leadership Council. Prior to joining North Star, he worked for six years in a bilingual school in Mexico City, where he founded the International Baccalaureate program at the middle school level, led significant gains in English test score results, and was named Teacher of the Year in 1999. He earned a B.A. in Social Justice from Duke University (1994) and completed his M.Ed. in School Administration from the City University of New York—Baruch College (2003).

## **NORMAN ATKINS**

Norman Atkins, Co-Founder of North Star Academy Charter School of Newark, formerly served as Co-Executive Director of the Robin Hood Foundation in New York City. Currently, he is the Founder and President of Uncommon Schools, a nonprofit charter management organization that builds, develops, crusades for, and ensures the greatness of the highest-performing college preparatory charter schools that raise the achievement of low-income students in the Northeast. He is Co-Founder of the New Jersey Charter Public Schools Association and an Adjunct Fellow at the New York Charter School Resource Center. He currently is a founder of Excellence Academy Charter School—an all-male elementary school in Bedford-Stuyvesant in Brooklyn, New York. He has spoken widely on charter schools at conferences throughout the country. He has also written widely on education, poverty and other social issues for such publications as *The New York Times Magazine*, *The New Yorker*, *Parenting*, *Family Life*, *Rolling Stone*, *The New York Observer*, and *The Washington Post*. He earned his B.A. in History from Brown University in 1984. Shortly after earning his M.A. in Educational Administration from Columbia University Teachers College in 1997, he received the school's Early Career Award.

## **MICHAEL MANN**

Michael Mann, Principal of North Star Academy – North Campus, teaches English and History and returns for his eighth year at North Star. He is a magna cum laude graduate from Harvard College (1991), an M.A. graduate in Teaching and Curriculum from Harvard's Graduate School of Education (1998) and is currently working towards an M.Ed. in School Leadership at Columbia University Teachers College. Mann has taught 7<sup>th</sup> grade English/History, led the 7<sup>th</sup> grade teacher team, served on the Good-to-Great Council and participated in the Reaching Our Young Men's Committee. Mr. Mann is the founding commissioner of the Brick City Soccer League, where he also coached both the boys' and girls' soccer teams at North Star, including participation in the national Youth Soccer Games. He was honored in 2001, as part of the Governor's Teacher Recognition Program, as one of Essex County's Teachers of the Year. After teaching English in China, Mann taught for three years in Washington, D.C., where he was named Teacher of the Year all three years. Before coming to North Star, he taught 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade Arts & Humanities at the Francis W. Parker Charter Essential School in Devens, Massachusetts



## **FACULTY BIOGRAPHIES**

***“The teachers really take pride in their students.”***

-- ANONYMOUS PARENT SURVEY RESPONSE, JULY 2003

*The teachers for the 2005-2006 school year are listed below in alphabetical order:*

**STEPHANIE AHN** (Math Teacher) joined North Star in 2005 after having taught for three years in urban public schools. At North Star, Ms. Ahn teaches 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade math. Prior to coming to North Star, Ms. Ahn taught 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade science for one year at KIPP Bridge College Preparatory (Oakland, CA). As a Teach for America member, Ms. Ahn taught 2<sup>nd</sup> grade for two years in the South Bronx in NYC, while also tutoring high school calculus. Ms. Ahn earned her B.S. in Business

Administration and Finance from Carnegie Mellon University and her M.S. in Elementary Education from Pace University.

**LINA ALMANZA** (Spanish Teacher) joined North Star in 2005 after having taught middle school Spanish and social studies for one year in Florida. At North Star, Ms. Almanza teaches high school Spanish. Ms. Almanza also worked for over four years with Quality Services for the Autism Community in NY as an Assistant Behavior Evaluator. Ms. Almanza earned her B.A. from Queens College, with a major in Psychology and a minor in Spanish.

**AMY BUSH** (Music Teacher) joined North Star in 2005 after having taught for three years in the public schools in Houston, TX. Ms. Bush teaches music at both the middle and high school. While in Houston, Ms. Bush taught drama and music to grades 6-8. She led her students in various productions including having produced and edited black and white films with musical score. Ms. Bush earned her Bachelor of Music from McGill University (Montreal, Canada).

**STEPHEN DECINA** (Science Teacher) joined North Star in 2004 after having served for one year as a Jesuit Volunteer Corps member. At North Star, Mr. Decina teaches 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade science. As a JVC member, Mr. Decina worked in a homeless day center in Tacoma, WA. He also volunteered as a court appointed special advocate for child victims of abuse and neglect while in Washington. Mr. Decina earned his B.S. from St. Joseph's University (Philadelphia, PA) with a double major in Accounting and Finance.

**KELLY DOWLING** (English Teacher) joined North Star in 2005 after having taught for three years at Newton Street School, a Newark public school. At North Star, Ms. Dowling teaches 6<sup>th</sup> grade English. While at Newton Street School, Ms. Dowling led a 3<sup>rd</sup> grade self-contained class and a 4<sup>th</sup> grade reading class, as well as having coordinated Saturday Academies for 3<sup>rd</sup> graders and helped lead after school programs. Ms. Dowling earned her B.A. from Montclair State University in Early Childhood Education and is currently pursuing her M.A. at Montclair State University in Administration and Supervision, concentrating on education.

**SHANNON DOWNEY** (History Teacher) is one of the founding North Star teachers, having taught 5<sup>th</sup> grade English since the school's inception. Before coming to North Star, she taught 4<sup>th</sup> grade at a parochial school in East Orange and worked as a teacher and director at Kids Corporation, an extensive summer enrichment program for students based in Newark. She earned a B.A. in Liberal Arts from St. Vincent's College in Latrobe, Pennsylvania (1994). At North Star, she has been a grade-level leader, mentor teacher, and member of both the school's Assessment Committee and Leadership Council. Currently, Ms. Downey also shares her talents as a teacher trainer through the Strategic Tutoring Center in Hackettstown. She can regularly be seen tutoring students in any free moment during and after school.

**GENNIVAL GALLMAN** (English/History Teacher) joined North Star in 2005 after having taught for seven years in urban schools. At North Star, Ms. Gallman teaches 6<sup>th</sup> grade English and history. Prior to coming to North Star, Ms. Gallman worked for three years in a public school in East Orange, NJ, having taught self-contained 5<sup>th</sup> grade, radio broadcasting and serving as co-coordinator of the school's Girls Club. Ms. Gallman also taught self-contained 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade at the Chad Elementary School in Newark and was a Pre-Kindergarten teacher at Holy Trinity School in East Orange. Ms. Gallman earned her B.A. from Rutgers University, with a double major in Journalism and African-American Studies.

**MELISSA GONCALVES** (History Teacher) joined North Star in 2005 after completing her undergraduate studies. At North Star, Ms. Goncalves teaches 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade history. Holding a Teach for America apprenticeship prior to joining North Star, Ms. Goncalves worked for about one year at Malcolm X Shabazz High School in Newark, NJ. Ms. Goncalves earned her B.A. from Rutgers University, with a major in History and a minor in Portuguese Studies, and studied abroad in Florence, Italy.

**JUANITA GREENE** (Math Teacher) returns to North Star for her fifth year teaching high school mathematics. In the crucial testing year (11<sup>th</sup> grade with the New Jersey High School Proficiency Assessment), Greene has significantly improved student achievement and ensured that all North Star students graduate having passed the Mathematics section of the HSPA. Greene also has founded and led the Yearbook Club that published its first edition with the graduating class of 2004. In past years, she co-led the Kwanzaa celebration and the cheerleading squad. Ms. Greene completed her B.A. in Mathematics at the University of Virginia in 1996 and recently completed an M.A. in Mathematics Education at Columbia University Teachers College (2002). Before coming to North Star, she taught 8<sup>th</sup> grade mathematics for two years in Richmond, VA, and for three years at the Dwight Englewood School in Englewood, NJ.

**DEVON JACKSON** (Dean of Students) enters his second year at North Star after 14 years teaching 12<sup>th</sup> grade at Meadowbrook High in Kingston, Jamaica. At Meadowbrook, he served as the Head of the Industrial Technology Department and coordinator of Reform of Secondary Education (R.O.S.E). Prior to teaching at North Star, Jackson attended Rutgers University where he earned a B.A. in Psychology to complement his teacher's college degree earned in Kingston, Jamaica.

**TANYA JOHNSON** (Math/Science/Computer Teacher) joined North Star in 2005 after having taught for two years in urban public schools. At North Star, Ms. Johnson teaches 5<sup>th</sup> grade math, science and computer courses. Prior to her time with North Star, Ms. Johnson taught 4<sup>th</sup> grade math and science for one year in Compton, CA. In addition, she served as a Fellows Advisor to the Los Angeles Teaching Fellows, helping with their training and hiring. She also taught kindergarten for one year at New Horizons Charter School in Newark, NJ. Ms. Johnson earned her B.A. in Political Science from UCLA.

**NIKKI JONES** (English Teacher) enters her second year at North Star as a 5<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade English teacher. She brings six years of experience teaching middle school Literacy at Newton Street School in Newark. In 2001 and 2003 she was the recipient of the award for Best Practices in the district of Newark. In addition to literacy, Ms. Jones has been teaching dance for the past five years and has toured several schools in Newark. In 2000, her Kwanzaa program was featured in the *Star Ledger*. Ms. Jones has participated in No Child Left Behind committees, Principal's meetings and Read-a-thons. A member of the school's Leadership Council, she earned her B.A. in 1999 in Urban Education and Anthropology.



**RACHEL JOSEPHS** (English/History Teacher) enters her second year at North Star with six prior years of teaching experience. She spent three years abroad teaching English in Paris, France and Bondi Beach, Australia before returning to enter the New York City Teaching Fellowship. She worked as a 6<sup>th</sup> grade teacher for three years in Harlem and spent her summers in Summerbridge and for the TEAK Fellowship, where she taught Math and Science. A member of the school's Leadership Council, Ms. Josephs received her Masters degree in Elementary



Education from Bank Street College (2003) and her B.A. in French and Art History from the University of Colorado.

**EMILY MANN** (English Teacher) joined North Star in 2002 as a learning specialist and will move to the school's North Campus as its English teacher. In her first three years with North Star, she helped coordinate the school's Skills Room and SPED services. Ms. McCord previously taught in New York and New Jersey public schools, including River East Elementary School in NYC and Emerson Elementary School in Plainfield, NJ. She recently received a Dodge Foundation grant to attend Mel Levine's schools and apply those lessons to North Star. Ms. McCord earned her M.A. in Reading Instruction from Columbia Teachers' College in 2001, and her B.S. in Special Education (magna cum laude) from Boston University in 1997.

**CLARENCE MCNEIL, ESQ.** (Science Teacher) joined North Star in 2005 after having taught for seven years at Our Lady of Good Counsel Elementary School in Newark, NJ. At North Star, Mr. McNeil teaches 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade science. A versatile teacher, Mr. McNeil taught many subjects at OLGC including science, religion, language arts, social studies and literature. Prior to becoming a teacher, Mr. McNeil worked in the criminal justice system as a municipal prosecutor as well as a criminal defense attorney. A lifelong resident of Newark and a graduate of the Newark public schools, Mr. McNeil earned his B.A. in Religion from Wesleyan University and his Juris Doctor from Rutgers Law School – Newark.

**ALLISON MILLER** (English Teacher) joined North Star in 2005 after having been Center Director at a Sylvan Learning Center. At North Star, Ms. Miller teaches high school English. Ms. Miller also worked for three years at Johns Hopkins University's Center for the Social Organization of Schools as an English/language arts instructional facilitator in places like Newark and Paterson. Prior to that, Ms. Miller taught high school English for four years in a public school in North Philadelphia, PA. Ms. Miller earned her B.S. in Secondary Education from Temple University.

**EUNICE MITCHELL** (Special Education Teacher) joined North Star in 2005 after having taught for two years at Morton Street School, a Newark public school. At North Star, Ms. Mitchell is the high school special education instructor. In her time at Morton Street, Ms. Mitchell served as the special education instructor for grades 6-8. Prior to that, she was an academic advisor at Rutgers University Business School as well as having worked at Seton Hall University at its Educational Opportunity Fund. Ms. Mitchell earned her B.A. in Psychology, in the Honors Program, from Villanova University and her M.A. in Developmental Psychology from Columbia University Teachers College.

**HAMMOD N'CHO** (Science Teacher) joined North Star in 2005 after having completed a National Science Foundation fellowship through Cornell University. At North Star, Mr. N'cho teaches 9<sup>th</sup> grade biology. In his fellowship, Mr. N'cho designed curriculum for urban schools in upstate NY. Mr. N'cho also served as a youth pastor for Community Outreach Program (Atlanta, GA) for two years, instilling life skills to at-risk and immigrant youth. He also conducted environmental work for the government of Ivory Coast and for the African Development Bank. Mr. N'cho earned his B.A. from Morehouse College, with a major in History and a minor in Biology. He also earned two M.S. degrees, one in Environmental Management and the other in Ecological Economics, both from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. Mr. N'cho is currently working towards his EdM in Psychological Counseling from Columbia University Teachers College.

**ANNE O'BRIEN** (Nurse) joined North Star in 2002. Ms. O'Brien is a registered nurse (RN), having worked as a school nurse for seven years prior to coming to North Star. Ms. O'Brien earned her B.A.

in social work from King College (Union, NJ) and attended a three year certification program at St. Elizabeth's Hospital in Brighton, MA.

**KRISTA PURNELL** (Math Teacher) joined North Star in 2005 after having taught for two years at Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. School in Newark, NJ. At North Star, Ms. Purnell teaches 6<sup>th</sup> grade math. Prior to coming to North Star, Ms. Purnell taught 5<sup>th</sup> grade math and served as her school's cheerleading coach. Ms. Purnell earned her B.A. in Psychology from University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill.

**SHANA PYATT** (School Leader in Training/Science teacher) is one of the school's founding teachers, entering her ninth year at North Star. Ms. Pyatt designed the North Star science curriculum, orchestrated the Kwanzaa celebration, co-led the school's Homegirls Only club, and organized student trips to four national parks: Yellowstone (Wyoming), Mammoth Caves (Kentucky), Acadia (Maine), and the Everglades (Florida). She was honored in 2000, as part of the Governor's Teacher Recognition Program, as one of Essex County's teachers of the year. Before arriving in 1997, Ms. Pyatt taught high school English for four years in Yonkers and Greenburgh, New York. She earned a B.A. in English and Secondary Education from Rutgers University ('92), a Master's degree in Multicultural Education from Iona College ('96), and a second Master's in General Science Education from Southern Connecticut State University ('98). Currently she is pursuing a doctorate in Health through Lancaster University in England.



**PAUL RAKOSKI** (Physical Education Teacher) enters his fifth year of teaching at North Star. He initiated the school's Wrestling Team in 2003-04 and currently serves as the team's coach, leading practices and tournament competitions. He coordinated the outdoor education programs for both middle and high school, and he initiated a CPR Certification Class for the 11<sup>th</sup> grade. He earned his B.A. in Physical Education and Health (1999) and his M.S. in Physical Education and Athletic Administration from Canisius College in Buffalo, NY. Before coming to North Star, Mr. Rakoski served in the Buffalo City Public Schools as an Americorps volunteer.

**JESSE RECTOR** (Math Teacher) enters his second year at North Star after seven years in the Newark traditional public schools. He will join the faculty at the school's North Campus after, in his initial year, having led the school's GEPA (Grade Eight Proficiency Assessment) scores to 80% proficiency, the school's highest scores ever. While teaching at Newark's First Avenue School, Mr. Rector led a consistent increase in performance on the GEPA, moving the students from 35% proficient in his first year to 73% three years later. Mr. Rector also is an instructor in New Jersey's alternate route program and a soccer coach in the Brick City League (where he became acquainted with North Star). He graduated from Rutgers University and is completing work towards a Masters degree in Mathematics Education.

**TROY SAVAGE** (Science Teacher) joined North Star in 2005 after completing his undergraduate studies. At North Star, Mr. Savage teaches high school science. A native of Canada, Mr. Savage recently spent a summer in Tanzania where he helped build school classrooms and taught English. Mr. Savage earned his B.S. from Princeton University, with a major in Civil and Environmental Engineering and certificates in International Affairs and Public Policy, Finance and Computer Science.



**JOCELYN SLOWEY** (English Teacher) joined North Star in 2005 after having taught for three years in a public school in the Bronx in NYC. At North Star, Ms. Slowey teaches 7<sup>th</sup> grade English. A Teach for America alumna, Ms. Slowey helped her school in the Bronx get grants for educational fieldtrips to Massachusetts and Washington, DC. Ms. Slowey earned her B.A. from Knox College (Galesburg, IL), with a major in English Writing and a minor in Theater, and earned her M.A. from Pace University in Secondary Education.



**JULIANN STOUDEMIRE** (Math Department Chair) enters her third year teaching mathematics at North Star and was recently named Chair of the high school Mathematics Department. In 2003-04, she coordinated the Community Service Club and formed part of the high school assessment committee. She completed her B.A. in Educational Studies at Brown University, where she was an Honors candidate. Ms. Stoudemire has worked in several urban schools, including Community Preparatory School, Hope High School (both in Providence, RI), El Puente Academy (Brooklyn) and Staten Island Institute of Arts and Sciences. She completed the Urban Education Semester through Bank Street College as a part of her undergraduate studies.

**WILLIAM STRACK** (History Teacher) enters his third year at North Star. He taught for three years in the Bronx at C.I.S. 147 and for six years at the Academy of Environmental Science Secondary School in New York. Prior to joining Teach for America in 1994, Strack earned a B.A. in Anthropology from Drew University (1994) and is currently working towards a M.A.T. in History from Rutgers University-Newark.

**SARAH TANTILLO** (Humanities Department Chair) returns for her sixth year as a teacher at North Star and serves as Chair of the high school Humanities Department. She also has coordinated the North Star's Teacher Strategies Seminar ("Bootcamp"), which has trained over 200 New Jersey public school teachers over the past four years. Ms. Tantillo spent three years as Executive Director of the New Jersey Charter Public Schools Association, after having founded and led the New Jersey Charter School Resource Center. Previously, she taught English and Humanities for seven years at Southern Regional High School in Manahawkin, NJ. She earned a B.A. (Cum Laude) in Comparative Literature from Princeton University (1987), an M.A. in Education from Harvard University (1991), and an M.A. in Writing Seminars from Johns Hopkins University (1995). She received her doctorate in educational theory, policy and administration from Rutgers University in 2000. Her thesis is, in large measure, about North Star Academy.



**AYANNA TAYLOR** (Director of College Placement & College Liaison) enters her fifth year at North Star. She founded and directed North Star's college placement program, taught high school English, and founded/coached the North Star Step Team. In addition to ensuring the best college placement for graduating seniors, as College Liaison, she also actively maintains contact and visits North Star alumni in their respective colleges. A 1994 graduate of the University of Pennsylvania (English), Ms. Taylor taught Language Arts at Martin Luther King, Jr. School in Paterson, NJ as a Teach for America corps member for four years. Prior to joining the North Star faculty, she was a member of the Leadership Newark fellowship program and worked as Associate Director for the New Jersey Charter Public Schools Association. Ms. Taylor received M.A. in Public Administration from Rutgers University Newark and currently is pursuing a Masters Degree at Colombia University.

**NOAH TEITELBAUM** (Math Teacher) enters his third year at North Star as the 5<sup>th</sup> grade Math teacher and Math Coach. Prior to joining North Star, he finished a two-year New York City Teaching Fellowship in C.S. 133--Fred Moore Academy. Previous to entering teaching, Teitelbaum had multiple experiences working in the fields of human rights and non-profits that have taken him everywhere from Croatia to Honduras. A member of the school's Leadership Council, he graduated from New College (B.A. in Cultural Anthropology and Theater, 1997) and completed a M.S.Ed in Elementary Education at Bank Street College (2003).

**CHRISTIE VAN DYKE** (Special Education Coordinator) returns to North Star for her fifth year teaching literacy and providing specialized learning support. Ms. Van Dyke coordinates and provides services for students with special needs through the work of the school's Skills Room. In the past four years she has also led small group instruction for students with less developed skills in literacy, math and organizational/study skills. Ms. Van Dyke has devoted significant time to assess the literacy skills of new students and provide the necessary intervention to bring students to grade level. Ms. Van Dyke came to North Star after teaching pre-kindergarten for one year at the Village Child Development Center in Manhattan. She earned a B.A. in Special Education from Penn State University in 2000.

**TILNEY WICKERSHAM** (History Teacher) joined North Star in 2005 as a 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade history teacher after having been at home to help raise her children. While raising her children, she tutored 7<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade math in her spare time. Ms. Wickersham brings eight years of teaching experience from the public schools of Washington, DC, where she also served as judge to their National History Day competition. Ms. Wickersham earned her B.A. in History from Yale University.

**ART WORRELL** (History Teacher) joined North Star in 2005 and will be based out of the school's North Campus. At North Star, Mr. Worrell teaches 5<sup>th</sup> grade history. After having completed an apprenticeship at North Star teaching English and history, Mr. Worrell taught Language Arts for half an academic year. Mr. Worrell earned his B.A. from Rutgers University, with a major in History and a minor in Religion.

#### NORTH STAR STAFF

Zakia Bilal, Secretary

Jean Goater, Bookkeeper (part-time)

Antonietta Bertucci, Teaching Assistant (Jesuit Volunteer Corps Volunteer)

Nereida Mejias, Administrative Assistant

Jenean Lytle, Office Manager, NSA – North Campus

Maurice Riddick, Custodian

#### FELLOWSHIPS IN RESIDENCE

Vaughn Thompson, New Leaders for New Schools

Tammi Sutton, KIPP Fisher Fellow

Mark Clarke, Building Excellent Schools Fellow

#### PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

Lori Hanes, Child Study Team Consultant

Scott Loeffler, CPA

William Mikesell, Architect

Philip Stern of Sills Cummis, Legal Counsel (*pro bono*)

### PARENT COUNCIL OFFICERS

Toni King, President  
Micheal Lytle, Vice-President  
Sharon Dadds, Treasurer  
Leslie Griffin-Mumford, Secretary

### VOLUNTEERS/STUDENT TEACHERS

**MAUREEN HIGGINS**, Wellesley College, Summer Intern

**MATTHEW COHEN**, Tufts University, Summer Intern

**DARA BLUME**, Harvard University, Center for Public Interest Careers Summer Intern

**PAUL MARTIN**, Princeton University, Project 55 Summer Intern

In the summer of 2005, these four interns helped design high school Interim Assessments in Math and Reading, working backwards from the SAT and AP exams.

**MELISSA GONCALVES:** Ms. Goncalves completed her student teaching during the Spring of 2005 and joins the North Star faculty for the 2005-06 school year (see biography above).

**RUTGERS UNIVERSITY-NEWARK EDUCATION CLASS:** Led by professor Alan Sadovnik, twelve students tutored North Star students after school twice a week

**KARIN NELSON:** Ms. Nelson, from the Montclair Junior League, worked consistently as a classroom aide for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade history classes.

**DAVID WISH:** Mr. Wish founded *Little Kids Rock*, a successful instrumental music program for urban youth. He consistently arrived at North Star early in the morning to run our supplemental guitar classes.

## NORTH STAR DONORS

The following major contributors supported North Star from its inception in January, 1997 through July, 2005. In most cases, they contributed via Uncommon Schools, a non-profit public charity established to raise funds for and support North Star. The private funds have primarily covered substantial renovation, improvement, and expansion of the North Star facilities.

Charles Hayden Foundation  
Fidelity Charitable Gift Fund  
Full Dimension Marketing  
Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation  
Grable Foundation  
HP Foundation  
Irvin Stern Foundation  
Paul Tudor Jones II  
Lehman Brothers, Inc.  
Lucent Technologies Foundation  
MCJ Foundation  
Benjamin Moore, Inc.  
Michael Mullen  
Peter Nachbur  
New Jersey Community Capital  
News Corporation  
Margaret and Frank Parker  
PNC Bank  
Pumpkin Foundation  
PSE&G  
Schumann Fund  
Shifting Foundation  
Tomorrow Foundation  
Turrell Fund  
Victoria Foundation  
Walton Family Foundation  
Judy Wildman/Ken Bannerman  
WKBJ Foundation

In addition, North Star received four federal school renovation grants and a U.S. Department of Education GEAR-UP grant (see section on college guidance and preparation).

## NORTH STAR CALL-RESPONSE

*Each morning, North Star students, faculty and staff (and some parents and visitors) meet as a community. Once every week or two, Mr. James Verrilli, the school's co-director, leads the students in a call-response, which goes as follows:*

**Who are you?**

***A star! I shine brightly for others!***

**Why are you here?**

***To get an education!***

**Why else?**

***(Two thumbs pointed inward) To be the great person I am meant to be!***

**And what will you have to do?**

***(Clapping in beat) Work! Hard! Work, work, work hard! Work! Hard! Work, work, work hard!***

**What else will you have to do?**

***Take care of each other!***

**And what will you need?**

***(Stomping in unison) Self-discipline!***

**Why?**

***(Fists raised high) To be the master of my own destiny!***

**What else will you need?**

***(Hands pointed inward and then progressively outward with each phrase) Respect for me, my peers, my teachers and all people.***

**Where are you headed?**

***To college!***

**And will you succeed?**

***Yes!***

**And when you succeed, what will you do?**

***Give back to others!***

**At ease. (Pause) What are we?**

***(Arms behind back) A community!***

## CORE VALUES OF COMMUNITY

### CARING

1. We take care of each other.
2. We help each other. We notice when someone needs help and we lend a hand.
3. We do not hurt each other physically or emotionally.

### RESPECT

1. We treat each person as valuable, worthy of greatness and goodness.
2. We accept individuals for who they are.
3. We show our respect at all times for each other, for property, for differences, and for opinions different from our own.
4. We are honest with each other.

### RESPONSIBILITY

1. We believe we are the masters of our own destiny and that we have the power to control our lives and shape our futures.
2. We are committed to the highest level of achievement: academic, social, and personal. We recognize our strengths and try to improve on our weaknesses.
3. We participate fully in everything we do. We do not do things halfway.

### JUSTICE

1. We act with fairness toward each other.
2. We get involved when members of the community are in trouble or need help.
3. We work to improve our community and the world.

I pledge to live by these values as a member of the North Star community:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signed

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## COMMITMENT PLEDGE BY PARENTS (GUARDIANS):

### **ATTENDANCE**

- We believe that our child's attendance and timeliness are vitally important to his/her success in school.
- We will make sure that our child has a safe and reliable means of transportation to and from school each day.
- We are fully committed to an 11-month schedule and support the idea that our child will be in school during July.
- We will not plan for family vacations or other extended absences to occur in July.
- We will make certain that our child attends school every day, except in cases of illness or another legitimate reason.
- We will telephone the school prior to 9:00 a.m. on the day of any absence to report why the child is out.
- We will not schedule routine doctor and dentist appointments during the school day. Consulting the North Star Academy calendar, we will try to schedule appointments on days or at times when school is not in session; or if such an appointment becomes absolutely necessary during school hours, we will return the child to school after the appointment.
- We will provide notes for any absences more than one day and will provide doctor's notes for any absence more than three days or for repeated absences.
- We will see to it that our child arrives on time each morning, and fully understand that lateness will result in public apologies, detentions and loss of credit in the high school.
- We understand that 20 or more absences without a doctor's note will require that my child repeat the grade.

### **UNIFORM**

- We promise that our child will wear the North Star uniform to school each day.
- We understand that our child is not allowed to substitute the required clothing and that uniform violations will result in the child missing class, being sent home or the parent bringing the proper items to school.

### **HOMEWORK**

- We understand that our child will have 90 minutes to two hours of homework each night, including weekends.
- We understand that regular homework completion is one of the keys to academic success.
- We understand that it is our responsibility to see that homework is completed. We will check our child's homework each night to ensure that it is complete, accurate and neat.
- We will provide a quiet, undisturbed time and space for the work to be completed.
- We understand there will be a series of consequences for my child if homework is not completed, including after school detention, poor grades, possible retention and mandatory parent attendance to show completed work.

### **PARENT CONFERENCES AND REPORT CARDS**

- We understand that parent conferences and the report card are essential to understanding a child's academic growth, strengths and weaknesses.

- We will pick up our child's report card on each Report Card Night between the hours of 3:30 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. and will attend all parent-teacher conferences.
- We understand that if the report card is not picked up one day after the report card night that our child will not be allowed to attend classes until it is picked up.

### **PARENT COUNCIL**

- We will actively participate on the Parent Council and attend its activities, events, and workshops. We will participate in annual election of parent representatives to the Board of Trustees and Parent Council committees.

### **DISCIPLINE**

- We have read, understand and support the North Star Academy Code of Conduct including all its rules, rewards and disciplinary consequences.
- We understand that teacher detentions happen on the day of the offense and that it is our child's responsibility to contact us and let us know they are staying.
- We understand that our child can not be excused from detention, extended day program or in-house suspension unless there is a family emergency.
- We understand that if our child is suspended that s/he will have to be picked up from school on the day of the offense, that we will have to accompany the child for a meeting in order for the child to return to classes and that our child will have to present a sincere apology before the community.

### **PROMOTION POLICY**

- We understand that our child must pass all but one core academic class in order to be promoted to the next grade. More than one failure will result in retention.

### **PARENT – SCHOOL COMMUNICATION**

- We agree to support our child's academic work by communicating regularly with my child's teachers.
- We will attend conferences to help our child succeed academically.

We understand that we are not required to sign this covenant as a term of our child's admission to North Star, but do so voluntarily because we believe that North Star is a partnership between parents and educators in creating the best possible education for our child.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Print name and relationship to child: \_\_\_\_\_



## PLEDGE BY THE SCHOOL:

1. We will operate North Star in accordance with its mission and its charter from the State of New Jersey.
2. We are fully committed to an 11-month schedule, September through July.
3. We will see to it that teachers always come to class prepared and that they continually engage students in the challenging, hard work that paves the way for success in school and life.
4. Each student will be assigned to a faculty or staff advisor to oversee the child's individual needs and progress within the school.
5. We promise to keep the school's doors open to parents, who may come into the school at any time – after gaining office clearance – and enter any classroom for observation, as long as there is no disruption.
6. Faculty will assign productive, meaningful homework each weeknight (except in special circumstances) to focus students on working to their fullest potential.
7. We will host Report Card Nights and/or Conference Nights during each trimester when faculty will be available to parents to discuss student progress.
8. We will facilitate the creation and organization of a Parent Council, which will provide parents a forum to offer input and express their concerns.
9. We will enforce the North Star Academy Code of Conduct consistently and fairly. When students are detained or suspended, we will notify parents of the reason.
10. We understand that this covenant goes above and beyond the call of duty. We sign it voluntarily because we believe that North Star is a partnership between the parents and the faculty and staff in creating the best possible education for our students.

**PRELIMINARY BUDGET SUMMARY 2004-05 THRU 6/30/05**  
**NORTH STAR ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL OF NEWARK**

	6/30/2005
LINE	
4 TOTAL ENROLLMENTS	298
5	
6 STARTING BALANCE	\$207,563
8 REVENUES	
9 GENERAL FUND	
10 BUDGETED FUND BALANCE	
11 LOCAL SHARE	\$485,599
12 STATE SHARE	\$1,705,949
13 TOTAL "LOCAL LEVY BUDGET"	\$2,191,548
14 CATEGORICAL AID	
15 SPECIAL EDUCATION	\$84,205
18 CONSOLIDATED/TECH AID	\$12,036
20 DEM. EFFECTIVE PROG. AID	\$128,946
21 REVERSE T&E (CLM) AID	\$215,790
21.1 NON-PUBLIC STUDENT AID	\$88,884
22 TOTAL CATEGORICAL AID	\$529,861
23 REVENUE FROM OTHER SOURCES	
INTEREST INCOME	\$1,000
MISC. REVENUE	\$3,056
TOTAL REVENUE FROM OTHER SOURCES	\$4,056
23.2 TPAF Social Security (Reimbursed)	\$133,873
24 TOTAL GENERAL FUND	\$2,859,338
25 RESTRICTED -- SPECIAL REVENUE FUND	
26 <u>REVENUES FROM STATE PROJECTS</u>	
28 CHARACTER EDUCATION AID	\$4,000
29 TOTAL STATE PROJECTS	\$4,000
30 <u>REVENUES FROM FEDERAL PROJECTS</u>	
31 FEDERAL CHILD NUTRITION PROG	\$171,743
32 FEDERAL NCLB FUNDS	\$268,320
NCLB CARRYOVER	\$52,015
34 FEDERAL IDEA-B	\$52,586
35.1 FEDERAL GEAR-UP GRANT	\$144,000
36 TOTAL FEDERAL PROJECTS	\$688,664
37 <u>REVENUE FROM OTHER SOURCES</u>	
38 TOTAL REVENUE FROM OTHER SOURCES	\$0
39 TOTAL SPECIAL REVENUE FUND	\$692,664
40 TOTAL INFLOWS	\$3,552,002

**YEAR-END REVENUES AND EXPENDITURES 2004-05 --JUNE 30, 2005**  
**NORTH STAR ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL OF NEWARK**

41	OUTFLOWS -- GENERAL FUND	6/30/2005
42	<u>INSTRUCTION</u>	
43	TEACHER SALARIES	\$1,483,785
44	OTHER SALARIES	\$6,460
45	PROF/TECH SERVICES	\$53,206
46	OTHER PURCHASED SERVICES	\$23,217
47	GENERAL SUPPLIES	\$105,108
48	TEXTBOOKS	\$12,274
49	MISC. (FIELD TRIPS, INSTR SUPPLIES)	\$39,935
50	TOTAL INSTRUCTION EXPENSE	\$1,723,985
51	<u>ADMINISTRATIVE</u>	
52	ADMIN SALARIES	\$110,300
53	CLERICAL (NON-CERT) SALARIES	\$91,151
54	COST OF BENEFITS	\$216,946
55	CONSULTANTS (inclu CPA/AUDITOR)	\$11,000
56	OTHER PURCH. SERVICES (PROF.DEV.)	\$6,132
57	COMMUNICATIONS/TELEPHONE	\$5,644
58	SUPPLIES & MATERIALS	\$1,083
63	MISCELLANEOUS (POSTAGE ETC.)	\$4,451
64	TOTAL ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSE	\$446,707
65	<u>SUPPORT SERVICES</u>	
66	SALARIES	\$29,800
67	PURCH. PROF/TECH (CONSULTANTS)	\$29,991
68	OTH PURCH SERVICES (OCCUPANCY)	\$80,564
69	RENTAL OF LAND & BUILDINGS	\$207,682
70	INSURANCE FOR PROPERTY, LIABILITY	\$20,618
71	SUPPLIES & MATERIALS	\$9,552
72	TRANSPORTATION (TRIPS)	\$30,758
74	ENERGY COSTS	\$71,439
75	MISCELLANEOUS	\$0
76	TOTAL SUPPORT SERVICES EXPENSE	\$480,404
77	<u>CAPITAL OUTLAY</u>	
78	INSTRUCTIONAL EQUIPMENT	\$4,107
79	NON-INSTRUCTIONAL EQUIPMENT	\$2,747
84	MISCELLANEOUS	\$0
85	TOTAL CAPITAL OUTLAY	\$6,854
85.2	TPAF Social Security (Reimbursed)	\$133,873
86	TOTAL GENERAL FUND	\$2,791,823
88	EXPENDITURES -- SPECIAL REVENUE FUND	
88	RESTRICTED/SPEC REV PROGRAMS	
89	<u>STATE PROJECTS</u>	
91	CHARACTER EDUCATION AID	\$4,000
93	TOTAL STATE PROJECTS	\$4,000
94	<u>FEDERAL PROJECTS</u>	
95	FEDERAL CHILD NUTRITION PROG	\$171,743
96	FEDERAL NCLB FUNDS	\$268,320
	NCLB CARRYOVER	\$52,015
98	FEDERAL IDEA-B	\$52,586
100	FEDERAL GEAR-UP GRANT	\$144,000
	TOTAL FEDERAL PROJECTS	\$688,664
102	TOTAL OTHER SOURCES	
103	TOTAL SPEC REVENUE FUND	\$692,664
106	TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$3,484,487
	Annual Revenues Less Expenditures	\$67,515
108	<u>FUND BALANCE</u>	<u>\$275,078</u>

**PRELIMINARY YEAR-END BALANCE SHEET (6/30/05)**  
**NORTH STAR ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL OF NEWARK**

	General Fund	Special Revenue	Food Program	Parent Council Fund	Scholarship Trust	Trust & Agency	Total
<b>Assets</b>							
<b>Current Assets</b>							
Checking Account - General	\$687,988			\$0	\$0	\$96	\$688,084
Payroll Account	\$918	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$620	\$1,538
Payroll Agency	\$757	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$110	\$867
Parent Council Fund	\$702	\$0	\$0	\$10,770	\$0	\$0	\$11,472
Unemployment Fund	\$371	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$13,997	\$13,031
College Trust Fund	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$28,917	\$0	\$28,917
A/R		\$0	\$32,245	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$32,245
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$690,736</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$32,245</b>	<b>\$10,770</b>	<b>\$28,917</b>	<b>\$14,823</b>	<b>\$777,491</b>
<b>Liabilities &amp; Fund Balance</b>							
<b>Current Liabilities</b>							
Cash Overdraft		\$0	\$28,753				\$28,753
Accounts Payable	\$121,606	(\$0)	(\$0)	(\$0)	(\$0)		\$121,606
Deferred Revenue	\$256,802	(\$0)	(\$0)	(\$0)	(\$0)	(\$0)	\$256,802
Due To Parent Council	(\$0)	(\$0)	(\$0)	\$10,770	(\$0)	(\$0)	\$10,770
Est. Due to Newark District	\$28,732				(\$0)	(\$0)	\$28,732
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>	<b>\$407,140</b>	<b>(\$0)</b>	<b>\$28,753</b>	<b>\$10,770</b>	<b>(\$0)</b>	<b>(\$0)</b>	<b>\$446,663</b>
<b>Fund Balance</b>							
Fund Balance	\$283,596		\$3,492	(\$0)	\$28,917	\$14,823	\$330,828
<b>Total Fund Balance</b>	<b>\$283,596</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$3,492</b>	<b>(\$0)</b>	<b>\$28,917</b>	<b>\$14,823</b>	<b>\$330,828</b>
<b>Total Liabilities &amp; Fund Balance</b>	<b>\$690,736</b>	<b>(\$0)</b>	<b>\$32,245</b>	<b>\$10,770</b>	<b>\$28,917</b>	<b>\$14,823</b>	<b>\$777,491</b>

## **BOARD RESOLUTION**

The North Star Academy Charter School of Newark Board of Trustees hereby authorizes submission  
of the

### **2004-05 ANNUAL REPORT**

to the Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Education.  
In addition, the Board of Trustees names Paul Bambrick-Santoyo, Co-Director, as the

### **LEAD PERSON**

for reporting purposes with the New Jersey Department of Education.

The filing of the annual report was authorized at the Board meeting held on

**MONDAY JULY 18, 2005**

# NORTH STAR ACADEMY TEACHING STANDARDS AND EVALUATION PROTOCOL

## 2005-2006

*North Star's teaching standards are both the job description referenced in the contract and the standards by which all teachers will be evaluated. All North Star Teachers are required to work toward achieving these standards. North Star uses a four-point scale to measure teacher progress toward the standards. It is described below:*

**Advanced** = Teacher consistently demonstrates impressive skill or expertise in the implementation of this standard.

**Proficient** = Teacher consistently demonstrates ability to meet this standard.

**Working towards** = Teacher is working towards achieving the standard but continued growth or greater consistency is needed.

**Needs Improvement** = Teacher needs to focus his or her efforts on this standard; it is not satisfactory at present.

North Star teachers will be able to:

### PERFORMANCE AREA #1--PLANNING AND PREPARING INSTRUCTION

1a--Design lessons that are clearly aligned with both the content and skill objectives and standards outlined in the curriculum and that prepare students to demonstrate mastery on the *North Star Assessments*, TerraNova Achievement Tests, Grade Eight Proficiency Assessment (GEPA), High School Proficiency Assessment (HSPA) and the school's final performance tasks.

1b--Design lessons that are focused on intended learning outcomes (mastery objectives) for students.

1c--Design a variety of activities to keep the students engaged and address different learning styles.

1d--Select and adapt appropriate learning materials and resources, and plan with students in mind.

1e--Use an organized system for lesson planning that keeps plans and materials organized and accessible for future use by the teacher or other teachers.

### Performance Area #2 --Classroom Management and Classroom Environment

2a--Create a positive, structured learning environment where students understand and abide by all school rules and demonstrate respect at all times

2b--Ensure that students are on task the entire period with minimal disruptions and no off-task peer-to-peer talking, demonstrating the ability to gain and maintain student focus and attention

2c-- Maintain the class's momentum by being organized, anticipating issues, handling intrusions, monitoring multiple activities (overlapping) and demonstrating ability to transition.

2d-- Develop a professional rapport with students and use positive reinforcement.

2e-- Make evident high expectations for student involvement and performance by involving all students in the process of learning and engaging students in learning activities throughout the period.

2f--Utilize time well to maximize student learning.

2g--Create a positive physical environment by having decorated bulletin boards and visual displays, appropriate desk configuration, HW/Agenda/Objectives. display, and an orderly, presentable room.

### Performance Area #3—Focus on Student Learning

#### Engaging Pedagogy Standards

3a--Properly structure and implement North Star procedures such as an arrival/welcome, setting up the work station, Do Now activity, oral drill, words of inspiration, transition procedures, HW assignment, closure and dismissal.

3b--Engage all students in a variety of academically rigorous learning activities that:

- develop a strong content knowledge base and important basic skills
- encourage conceptual understanding and
- challenge student thinking while facilitating application, analysis, synthesis or evaluation.

3c--Demonstrate a repertoire of teaching strategies that ensure student mastery such as presentation, guided practice and independent practice (I do, We do, You do), modeling, breaking down complex tasks, providing repeated practice, sequencing, providing reinforcement/review or using mnemonics.

3d--Foster classroom discussion with thought-provoking questions and relevant connections. Provide opportunities for each student to listen and to speak for many purposes.

3e--Distinguish oneself as an innovator by using some or all of the following:

- active, student-centered learning projects.
- interdisciplinary units and
- integrating the computer as a learning tool.

3f--Demonstrate solid understanding and knowledge of the subject matter.

3g—Consistently communicate high expectations and tenacity, sending the message that <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the student can do it;</li> <li>this is important;</li> <li>the teacher will not give up on the student.</li> </ul>
3h--Set high standards for quality student work and work diligently to see that students reach that standard.
3i--Act as a dynamic presence, demonstrate a strong sense of confidence, show enthusiasm for the subject and model good speaking skills and movement.
<b><u>Adapting Instruction Standards</u></b>
3j--Focus constantly on student learning, frequently assessing student comprehension and reflecting upon and adjusting instruction to respond to student learning needs.
3k-- Teacher strives for clarity by frequently checking for understanding, unscrambling confusion, being explicit, communicating objectives, activating current knowledge, summarizing (10-2) or making connections. Communicate clearly to students, directions, objectives, and performance standards to ensure their understanding.
3l--Deliver appropriate background knowledge and skills that students will need prior to learning new concepts.
3m--Take responsibility for student failure and persistently develop interventions and find effective instructional strategies to meet individual and class wide needs.
3n--Seek the assistance of our learning specialist(s) to address learning problems and student failure.
3o--Work to make content relevant to the students' experiences.
<b><u>Assessment Standards</u></b>
3p--Establish and communicate clear assessment criteria, and employ a sufficient variety of assessment strategies and instruments to provide timely, fair, accurate and constructive feedback on student knowledge and performance.
3q--Return graded material to students in a timely manner and provide students with updates about their grades/progress.
3r--Review student performance on assessments and adjust instruction to ensure student mastery of standards.
3s--Implement performance assessment techniques such as portfolios and rubric assessments.
3t--Provide personalized and helpful feedback on progress reports and report cards.
<b><u>Performance Area #4-- Concern for Students</u></b>
4a—Demonstrate concern in class by creating a climate of caring in the classroom, and addressing all students in a respectful, positive and caring manner, and by demonstrating that s/he will not give up on a student.
4b—Demonstrate concern out of class by giving up free time to work with students, and informing families and students about the academic progress of the student through frequent phone calls and conferences.
<b><u>Performance Area #5-- Professionalism and Work Habits</u></b>
5a--Put in sufficient time and effort to succeed including using time before and after school and at lunch, to assist students, complete various duties, and attend meetings. (arriving daily by 7:30 am and not leaving until at least 4:30 pm)
5b--Demonstrate good work habits by being consistently punctual and maintaining excellent attendance.
5c--Share responsibility in non-instructional supervision requirements such as monitoring the hallways, walking students to class at transitions, monitoring dismissal time and lunch or playground duty. Teachers with full teaching loads will have 1-2 supervisory duties per week. Teachers with less than full loads will have additional responsibilities.

5d--Supervise a well-designed, afternoon activity and an advisory. That activity will meet at least 45 minutes 2-3 times per week and will be the following:

\_\_\_\_\_for the 2005 – 2006 School Year

5e--Submit required items on time including plans, progress reports and report cards. Keep accurate records of student attendance and clear accounting for books and supplies.

5f--Use good communication skills with students, parents, and colleagues, and keep the co-directors fully advised about the needs of students and staff.

5g--Dress and speak as a professional. (Students, parents and guests should be able to identify teachers immediately by their professional attire. There should be no jeans, jean jackets, t-shirts, sweats, or sneakers. For the male faculty it is expected that they will have a collared shirt and tie and slacks, or a professional sweater with a collared shirt or turtleneck. For the female staff they should have a blouse with professional slacks, skirt or dress.)

5h—Always work to grow and develop as a professional by improving content knowledge, developing their craft, implementing suggested improvements from the administration, working collaboratively with colleagues and participating actively in all staff meetings and in-house professional development programs.

5i- Participate actively in evening cultural events, Graduation, Parent Conference and Report Card Night activities.

I have read and understand the job description/ teaching standards of North Star Academy Charter School of Newark. I further understand that I will be evaluated according to these standards.

Signature of Teacher

Date



## NORTH STAR ACADEMY FINAL TEACHER EVALUATION

POSITION: \_\_\_\_\_

### Overall Commendations

**PLANNING AND PREPARATION**

1.

**CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT**

1.

**FOCUS ON STUDENT LEARNING – ENGAGING PEDAGOGY**

1.

**FOCUS ON STUDENT LEARNING – ADAPTING INSTRUCTION**

1.

**FOCUS ON STUDENT LEARNING –ASSESSMENT**

1.

**CONCERN FOR STUDENTS**

1.

**PROFESSIONALISM AND WORK HABITS**

1.

Overall Recommendations and Areas for Growth	ACTION PLAN: To implement Recommendations
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.
6.	6.
7.	7.
8.	8.
9.	9.
10.	10.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Supervisor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Teacher

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## STUDENT PROGRESS REPORT

# ***NORTH STAR ACADEMY*** *CHARTER SCHOOL OF NEWARK*

## **APPLICATION FOR ADMISSION**

Student's Name \_\_\_\_\_ (last) \_\_\_\_\_ (first)

Birth date \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ Student's Social Security #: \_\_\_\_\_ Sex: M F (circle one)  
month day year (Optional)

Name of Child's School: \_\_\_\_\_ Current Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/s (or Guardian/s): \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Apt#: \_\_\_\_\_  
**Newark, NJ** Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address (if different from above): \_\_\_\_\_ Apt#: \_\_\_\_\_  
**Newark, NJ** Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone#: \_\_\_\_\_

In case of emergency, contact (relative or neighbor): \_\_\_\_\_

Phone # of emergency contact: \_\_\_\_\_

Please list any siblings currently attending North Star: \_\_\_\_\_

Please list any siblings also applying to North Star: \_\_\_\_\_

I am applying to have my child \_\_\_\_\_ attend North Star Academy Charter School of Newark. I understand that North Star features a longer school day, 11-month school year, a strong discipline code, uniforms, and parent involvement. Please accept this application for admission. I understand that prospective fifth graders are chosen by an annual lottery. I also understand that if my child is not initially selected for admission to the fifth grade, s/he will be placed on a waiting list for the year. If spots open up during that year, students will be admitted from the waiting list in the order in which they were selected. Should there be any new openings for another particular grade in subsequent years, North Star will conduct a new lottery and generate a new waiting list to fill those spots. I hereby request that you consider this an application for the next and all subsequent lotteries that are used to fill possible North Star openings for which my child may be eligible.

Signature of Parent or Guardian \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

OFFICE USE ONLY: CLASS OF \_\_\_\_\_

## ► ORIGINAL SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN

**N**orth Star is already utilizing a wide variety of accountability measures, all of which are reported on above. The school will continue to use these measures and to work ceaselessly to produce improvements in all areas.

### MARKET DEMAND & ENROLLMENT STABILITY

- Enrollment
- Waiting list
- Mobility rate
- Transfer rate
- Annual return rate
- Cumulative stability index

### IMPROVEMENT ON ASSESSMENTS

- Statewide tests (ESPA, GEPA, HSPA)
- National-normed test (e.g. Stanford Nine)
- Performance-based assessments
- PSAT & SAT for high school students
  - Will take PSAT in fall of sophomore and junior year
  - Will take SAT in spring of junior year and fall of senior year

### SUCCESSFUL LIFE/SCHOOL OUTCOMES

- High school placement (e.g. selective high schools)
- High school graduation
- College placement & graduation

### INPUT MEASURES

- Student attendance
- Parent involvement
- Teacher attendance
- Teacher turnover
- Student promotion rate
- Suspension rates
- Violence/vandalism report
- Fiscal measures (see section 3 above)

### SATISFACTION SURVEY INSTRUMENTS

- Students, parents, teachers

**AMENDMENTS TO BYLAWS: No amendments made in 2004-05.**





## **BOARD RESOLUTION**

The North Star Academy Charter School of Newark Board of Trustees hereby authorizes Paul Bambrick- Santoyo, Charter School Lead Person, to represent North Star as

### **AFFIRMATIVE ACTION, SECTION 504, & TITLE IX OFFICER**

for all purposes in accordance with the regulations of the New Jersey Department of Education.

These appointments were authorized at the Board meeting held on

**MONDAY JUNE 6, 2005**

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Paul Bambrick- Santoyo,  
Co-Director (Board Secretary)



## SAMPLE SECTION OF NORTH STAR ASSESSMENTS:

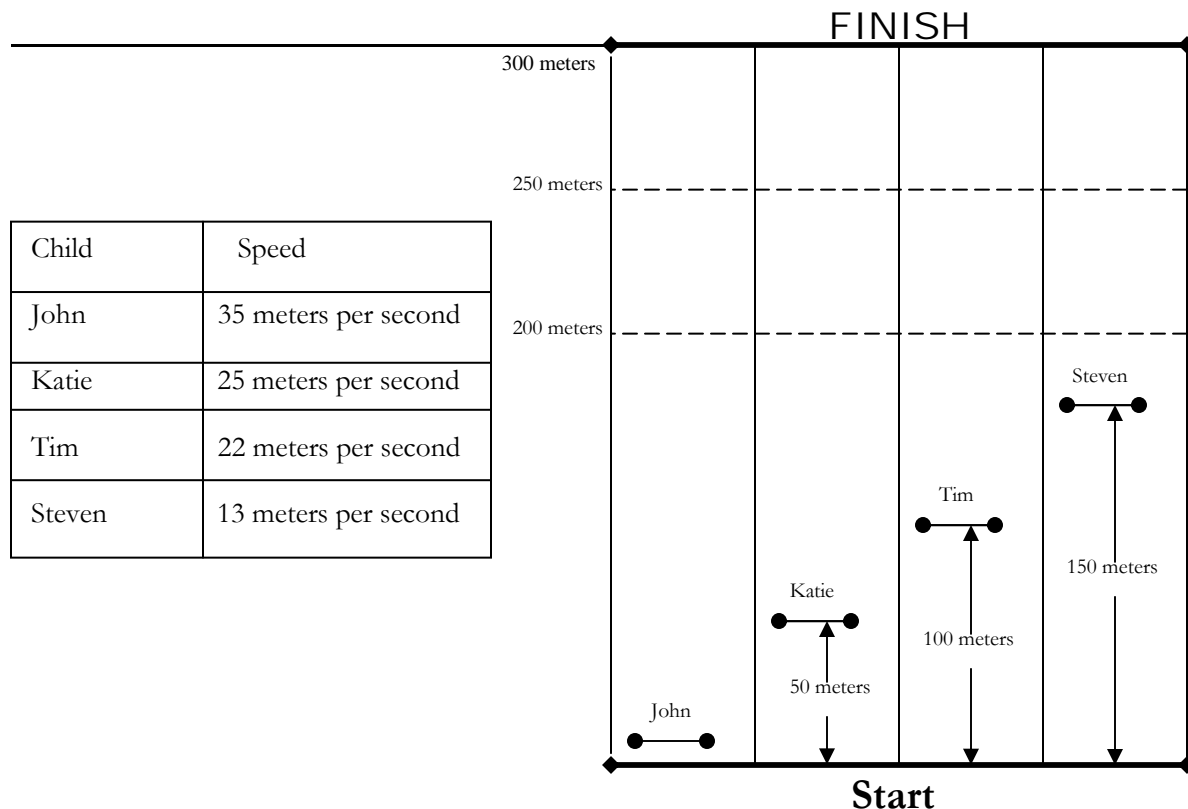
### 7<sup>th</sup> GRADE, 4<sup>th</sup> Assessment, SECTION 4: Mathematics

A track meet is being held by the Smith family at their local park. The main event is the 300-meter dash. All 4 children will race and based on each child's speed, his or her starting position varies, with the youngest child starting closest to the finish line and the oldest starting farthest away. Mr. Smith wants to see which of his children will be leading at different times during the race. Help him figure out the following:

- Who will be winning the race at three certain times during the race
- Who won the 300-meter race

#### ACTIVITY 1: FIND OUT WHO WON THE RACE

Mr. Smith drew this map to show where his 4 children began the race. He also marked the 3 places along the track where he wants to calculate the leader of the race at that point. Those three points are at 200 meters, 250 meters, and 300 meters. The chart below shows the speeds of his 4 children.




- 44) Using the chart and the graph from above help Mr. Smith calculate who is winning the race after 200 meters, 250 meters, and 300 meters. Complete this by filling in the chart below that represents how far each child has run after a certain amount of seconds. Remember that all 4 children started at a different point on the racetrack.

<u>SECONDS</u>	<b>John</b>	<b>Katie</b>	<b>Tim</b>	<b>Steven</b>
<b>START</b>	0 meters	50 meters	100 meters	150 meters
<b>1</b>	35 meters	75 meters	122 meters	163 meters
<b>2</b>	70 meters	100 meters	144 meters	176 meters
<b>3</b>	105 meters	125 meters	166 meters	189 meters
<b>4</b>				
<b>5</b>				
<b>6</b>				
<b>7</b>				
<b>8</b>				
<b>9</b>				

Who is winning after 200 meters? \_\_\_\_\_  
 Who is winning after 250 meters? \_\_\_\_\_  
 Who is winning after 300 meters (or who won the race)? \_\_\_\_\_

### **Activity 2: Find the Mistakes**

Mr. Smith's brother, Uncle Gary, makes a few comments about the race before it occurs. Based on your findings in the last question, explain why Uncle Gary is wrong.

45)  


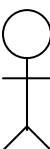
"The fastest runner (John) will always be in first place."

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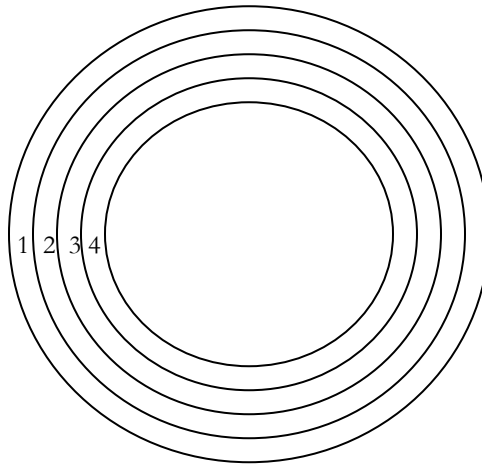
"Whoever starts closest to the finish line (Steven) will always win."

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- 47) The second race was held on a circular track as seen below. John ran the race with a string behind him so he could measure the distance that he ran. He ran his first lap on the inside lane (or Lane 4). He thinks that if he runs his second lap on the outside lane (or Lane 1) then the string will still cover the whole lap. Explain why John is wrong.




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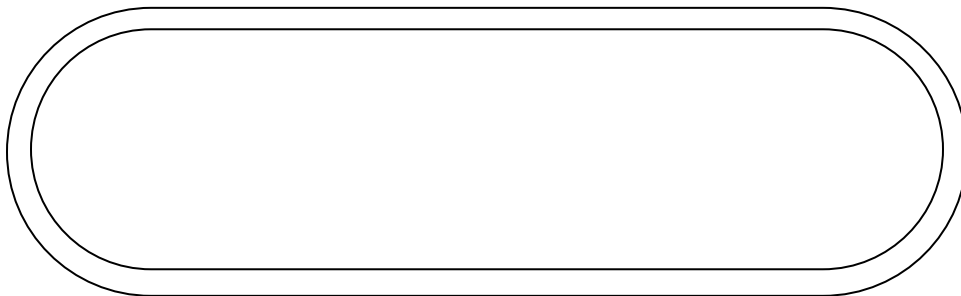


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- 48) How far around the circular track is Lane 1 if the diameter of the Lane 1 is 100 meters?

\_\_\_\_\_ meters

- 49) If the third and final race is run on an oval track like the one below, how would you calculate the distance around it?




---

NSA Analysis Sheet Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_ NSA # and Subject:

Grade/Class: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

<b>STANDARDS ANALYSIS</b>	<b>INSTRUCTIONAL PLAN</b>	
<b><u>CUMULATIVE REVIEW:</u></b> What standards has the class mastered ? •		
<b>STANDARDS ANALYSIS</b>	<b>ANALYSIS OF WHY STUDENTS DID NOT LEARN IT</b>	<b>INSTRUCTIONAL PLAN</b>
<b><u>WHOLE CLASS INSTRUCTION:</u></b> What standards warrant more time for whole-class instruction and review? • •		
<b>STANDARDS ANALYSIS</b>	<b>ANALYSIS OF WHY STUDENTS DID NOT LEARN IT</b>	<b>INSTRUCTIONAL PLAN</b>
<b><u>SMALL GROUP INSTRUCTION:</u></b> What standards warrant more time for small-group instruction and review? •	• •	
<b>STUDENTS OF MAJOR CONCERN</b>	<b>MAJOR STANDARDS OF CONCERN / WHY ARE THEY NOT LEARNING?</b>	<b>INSTRUCTIONAL PLAN</b>
•		

# ***NORTH STAR ACADEMY*** *PAYCHECK SYSTEM*

Date

Pay to the Order of \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Dollars

Teacher  
Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature  
\_\_\_\_\_

Needs Improvement		Well Done	
Absent/ Late		Demonstrating caring-being helpful	
S—Sitting or standing up straight		Showing extra responsibility or job	
T—Tracking the speaker with your eyes		Showing improvement	
A—Always doing one's work and being on task –Not talking		Going above & beyond on work	
R—Showing Respect at all times		Showing leadership	
Homework			
Following rules/ directions / being responsible			

Needs Improvement					
	Thursday	Friday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
Absent/ Late					
S—Sitting or standing up straight					
T—Tracking the speaker with your eyes					
A—Always doing one's work and being on task- Not talking					
R—Showing Respect at all times					
Homework					
Following rules/ directions/being responsible					
Positive Bonus- Core values					
Demonstrating caring-being helpful					
Showing extra responsibility or job					
Showing improvement					
Going above & beyond on work					
Showing leadership					

STUDENT NAME \_\_\_\_\_ Week of \_\_\_\_\_ TOTAL OFF \_\_\_\_

# High-Achieving N.J. School To Be Used As Model In Cleveland

## *Charter School Has 100 Percent College Acceptance, Attendance Rate*

POSTED: 12:48 pm EDT April 29, 2005

**CLEVELAND --** With budget cuts and poor test scores and graduation rates, public education is taking a beating.



But some schools are making the grade, including a unique public charter school where everyone goes to college. "5 On Your Side" education reporter Debora Lee reported that efforts are now under way to bring that kind of success to Cleveland.

Carmen Ortiz's daughter goes to a public high school, not in Cleveland, but in Newark, N.J. Tucked in the shadows of New York City, only 26 percent of the 12th-graders in Newark plan to attend college, and even fewer actually go. But that is not the case at North Star Academy, where every child is a star shooting for higher education.

"In our first graduating class, the class of 2004, 100 percent were accepted to college and 100 percent are currently attending college," said North Star co-director Paul Bambrick. The students are going to college even though some came there performing two to three years behind their grade level.

"In the other school, I was really behind," said fifth-grader Tiana High. "I had B's and C's. But here I was on the honor roll twice." Bambrick attributes the success to high expectations for academics and behavior. The school opened with just 5th- and 6th-graders, and then expanded to high school one grade at a time. It's a place where students greet their teachers with a handshake and hold community circles to encourage each other and celebrate successes. North Star was founded with one simple, unwavering belief -- that every child can succeed in college and life beyond.

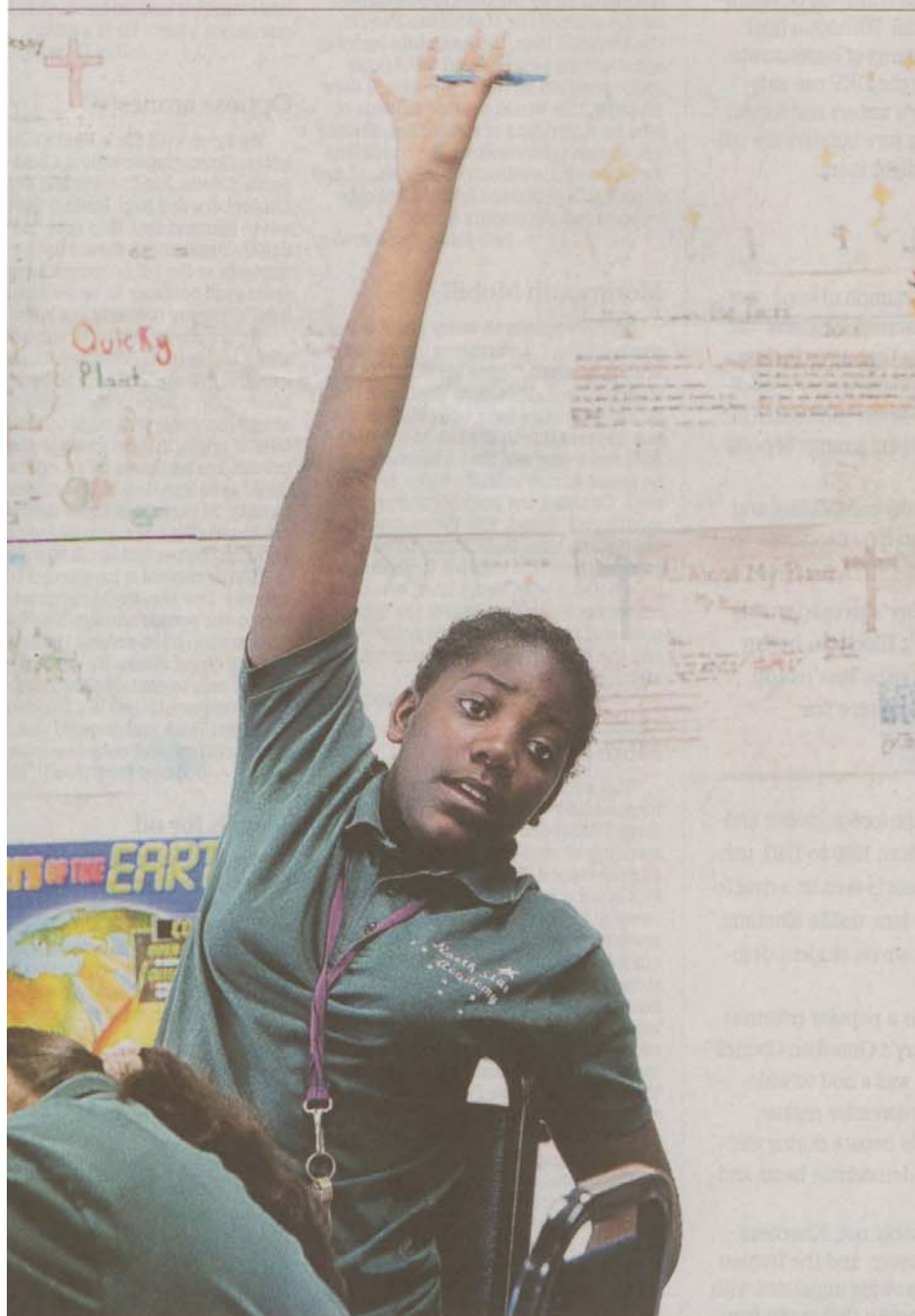
And now, Cleveland entrepreneur John Zitzner can see this kind of school in Cleveland. He founded the E-City after-school program to teach students the principals of entrepreneurship, and next year, E-City will open an entire school, an entrepreneurship academy similar to North Star. As Zitzner puts it, the school will teach kids how to do life.

"The rap that many charter schools get around the country is that they're not held accountable and I believe accountability is key. We're going to achieve results beyond the minimum accountability target," said Zitzner. There are striking similarities between Cleveland and Newark. Cleveland is the poorest city in the country, Newark is the second poorest. And while Cleveland's high school graduation rate is improving, like in Newark, it's still a challenge. It's possible that the Cleveland Municipal School District may sponsor the entrepreneurship academy. CEO Barbara Byrd-Bennett told NewsChannel5 that she supports the concept as long as it meets state requirements in basic curriculum. She also says teachers are working with E-City to put that curriculum together.

For more information about E-City and the plans for the new school, visit [www.ecitycleveland.com](http://www.ecitycleveland.com).

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# SHARING THE SECRET OF THEIR SUCCESS



Janita Lovett, 10, a fifth-grader at North Star Academy, has the answer in her science class. North Star is among a group of Newark charter schools with plans to spin off additional facilities in their own mold.



PHOTOS BY PATTI SAPONE/THE STAR-LEDGER

From left, Tiana High, 11, Shantia Ellison, 11, and Chaz Hall, 12, attend North Star's "morning circle," a sort of daily pep rally.

## Newark charter to add second middle school

BY JOHN MOONEY  
STAR-LEDGER STAFF

There's something unmistakable about North Star Academy, and it begins in the morning when drums pound and chants rise from this former bank building in downtown Newark.

The occasion is the "morning circle," a half-hour each day that is part pep rally and part sermon for teachers and students.

"Why are you here?" starts the call-and-response, led by the middle school students.

"To get an education!"

"Where are you headed?"

"To college."

"Will you succeed?"

"Yes. Yes."

Successful charter schools like North Star Academy have already changed the way thousands of students are taught in New Jersey. Now may come their biggest challenge yet.

Starting next year, North Star leads a fledgling group of established charter schools that want to spin off second, even third schools in their own mold.

Currently a middle school and adjoining high school, North Star will add a second middle school next year inside the former Our Lady of Good Counsel elementary school in Newark's North Ward.

Also in the city, the Robert Treat Academy hopes to add another elementary school within the next two years, and TEAM Academy plans to apply to the state this fall for permission for a second middle school and a high school.

In Morristown, the Unity Charter School is [See **CHARTER**, Page 25]



## CHARTER

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 21

In talks with the state to possibly open a second K-8 school for 2006-07.

Such plans to try to duplicate the success are always risky, say state and charter officials. But they say this is one way to bolster a movement that has slowed a bit recently.

"In looking at ways to grow quality, the first thing you look at is what is working," said Rochelle Hendricks, the state's charter schools director. "We see this as a good choice with a true quality component. . . . And it takes away a lot of the guesswork."

Public charter schools, little more than a decade ago, have multiplied around the nation. Typically small, innovative and led by educators, parents and community leaders, charters now number more than 3,400 schools with almost 1 million students.

Starting as a middle school, North Star was one of New Jersey's original 13 charters in 1997. Today, the state has 50 charter schools serving about 14,000 students.

As measured by test scores, the performance of charter schools in general has been mixed, and their growth has lagged recently, with just two new schools approved by the state this year.

But North Star has flourished, adding a high school four years ago and producing student test results on or near the top of all New Jersey schools serving comparable low-income students.

To continue to grow, its leaders want a second middle school. The high school has just 120 students, not nearly enough to offer the diversity of courses and programs at even a small public high school typically provides.

A recent calculus class had just five students in it, and only this year could the school even provide Advanced Placement courses. There are virtually no electives beyond the standard curriculum.

"Everybody takes Spanish, science with history and science," said Paul Bambrick, a director of the school. "We just don't have the student body to provide the electives."

But creating a second school demands more than just duplicating the programs. Bambrick said a "critical element is the teachers and

culture, marked by its high expectations and no-excuses discipline.

"I've been here seven years so I have had the opportunity to live the culture," said Michael Mann, the social studies teacher who will be principal of the new school. "It's not like we will be just turning on a switch. I think we have a lot of things figured out."

North Star is the only school so far to win the state's permission for the move, but several others say proposals should be in place within the next two years.

Robert Treat Academy, a K-8

school that will graduate its first students this month, has plans to open a second school in two years. It would be located in the same North Ward building where the school started in 1997 before moving to its Clifton Avenue building.

"We have talked about it for a while, and we have the facility to do it," said Michael Pallante, the principal. "We could create a district in itself."

TEAM Academy, a middle school in Newark's South Ward, is part of a national network of 36 schools known as Knowledge Is

Power Program. Another KIPP school is located in Camden.

Boasting its own success story, TEAM wants to expand with a second middle school in 2006-07 and a new high school beyond that. Once fully enrolled, the schools would serve as many as 1,400 students in all, larger than many districts in New Jersey.

"We see a lot of children in Newark who would benefit from a KIPP-like school," said Hill.

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